34276

National Library of Canada / Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

CANADIAN THESES ON MICROFICHE / THÈSES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE

NAME OF AUTHOR/NOM DE L'AUTEUR MARIE-LOUISE ABRIOUX

TITLE OF THESIS/TITRE DE LA THÈSE MARITAL PERCEPTIONS AND LIFE SATISFACTIONS OF MIDDLE-AGED HUSBANDS AND WIVES

UNIVERSITY/UNIVERSITÉ UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED/ GRADE POUR LEQUEL CETTE THÈSE FUT PRÉSENTÉE MASTERS OF EDUCATION

YEAR THIS DEGREE CONFERRED/ANNÉE D'OBTENTION DE CE GRADE 1977

NAME OF SUPERVISOR/NOM DU DIRECTEUR DE THÈSE HARVEY W. ZINGLE

Permission is hereby granted to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

L'autorisation est, par la présente, accordée à la BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans l'autorisation écrite de l'auteur.

DATED/DATÉ August 17, 1977 SIGNED/SIGNÉ Marie-Louise Abrioux

PERMANENT ADDRESS/RÉSIDENCE FIXE 212 MICHENER PARK
EDMONTON, ALBERTA
T6H 4M5

NL-91 (3-74)

National Library of Canada

Cataloguing Branch
Canadian Theses Division

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Direction du catalogage
Division des thèses canadiennes

NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us a poor photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30. Please read the authorization forms which accompany this thesis.

THIS DISSERTATION
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED

AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de mauvaise qualité.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30. Veuillez prendre connaissance des formules d'autorisation qui accompagnent cette thèse.

LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE

NL-339 (3/77)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

MARITAL PERCEPTIONS AND LIFE SATISFACTIONS OF MIDDLE-AGED HUSBANDS AND WIVES

by

© MARIE-LOUISE ABRIOUX

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1977

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled MARITAL PERCEPTIONS AND LIFE SATISFACTIONS OF MIDDLE-AGED HUSBANDS AND WIVES submitted by MARIE-LOUISE ABRIOUX in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Counselling Psychology.

.....
Supervisor

.....

.....

Date August 11, 1977

DEDICATION

TO MY PARENTS

who made me wonder why
couples stayed together

and

TO MY PARENTS-IN-LAW

who made me wonder why
couples broke up

ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate attitudes concerning marital perceptions and life satisfaction of middle-aged husbands and wives who were in one of two periods of life. Couples in the postparental period were considered to be those who had launched all their children from the home, while couples in the parental period were considered to be those who still had some of their children in the home.

A total of 160 subjects, that is, 80 couples were identified from two sources of intact marriages in the city of Edmonton. Forty of these couples constituted a counselled (C) sample of middle-aged husbands and wives who were engaged in marital or family counselling at the time of this investigation. The noncounselled (NC) sample was comprised of 40 middle-aged couples who were not receiving counselling.

A modified version of the Middle Years Life Satisfaction Scale (MYLSS), designed by Stinnett and Hayes (1971), was used to measure life satisfaction and the Middle Years Marital Perception Scale (MYMPS), which was based on an Older Person's Perception Scale, designed by Stinnett, Carter and Montgomery (1972), was used to obtain background information from the subjects and to investigate their perceptions of marriage.

The most important finding of this study was that the recent launching of the last child from either the NC or C couples' homes constituted a situational crisis which adversely influenced the couples' attitudes towards marriage and life. The results of the study also indicated that the NC and C samples of middle agers were significantly different from one another in their manner of responding to the two questionnaires. Their similarities, however, showed that they were fairly satisfied individuals in terms of their relationships with their children, their health, their self-concepts and their standard of living. The prospect of aging on the other hand seemed to be a concern for the majority of the middle agers in this study.

In addition, the results of the study showed that life satisfaction was significantly related to: number of children; wife's employment; income; educational level; occupational level; volunteer work; and church involvement. No significant relationships were found to exist between life satisfaction and the following: sex; duration of marriage; social participation; and age. Significant relationships between selected perceptions of the MYMPS and the following were also found: number of children; duration of marriage; age; wife's employment; income; and church involvement. No significant relationships were found between selected perceptions of the MYMPS and the following: sex; occupational level; educational level; volunteer work; and social participation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express her gratitude and appreciation to the following people for their assistance in the completion of this thesis:

HARVEY ZINGLE, my supervisor, for his guidance and valued criticism in the development of this study;

HENNY VAN LIEBURG, my mother, for giving me her time and her patience in her conscientious typing of this manuscript;

NICOLA and MARIO, my children, for showing me that I could have the "best of both worlds";

and especially

DOMINIQUE, my husband, for believing in me and for giving me so much emotional support and editorial assistance throughout this entire project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		Page
I	THE STUDY IN PERSPECTIVE.....	1
	Introduction to the Study.....	1
	Nature of the Problem.....	1
	General Statement of the Problem.....	11
	Purpose of the Study.....	12
	Outline of the Study.....	13
II	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	14
	Introduction to the Middle Years.....	14
	The Middle Years and Life Satisfaction....	18
	On Men.....	19
	On Women.....	22
	On Middle Age.....	27
	Section Summary.....	29
	The Middle Years and the Marital Relationship.....	31
	On Longitudinal Data.....	31
	On Cross Sectional Data.....	33
	On Stage Specific Data.....	36
	Section Summary.....	39
	Variables Influencing Evaluations of Life and Marriage.....	41
	On Children.....	41
	On Sex.....	44
	On Age.....	45

CHAPTER		Page
	On Duration of Marriage	47
	On Social Participation	49
	On Wife's Employment	51
	On Socioeconomic Status	53
	Operational Definitions	56
	Hypotheses for the Present Investigation	61
	Major Hypotheses	62
	Subsidiary Hypotheses	62
III	METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY	65
	Introduction to the Design	65
	The Subjects	66
	The Noncounselled Sample	67
	The Counselled Sample	68
	Description of the Samples	69
	The Instruments	77
	Middle Years Life Satisfaction Scale	77
	Middle Years Marital Perception Scale	79
	The Procedure	81
	Noncounselled Sample	81
	Counselled Sample	85
IV	RESULTS OF THE STUDY	88
	Introduction to the Chapter	88
	Treatment of the Data	88
	Results of Frequency Tabulations	89

CHAPTER		Page
	Results of Statistical Analysis.....	100
	Major Hypotheses.....	101
	Subsidiary Hypotheses.....	120
	Summary of Statistical Analysis.....	151
V	DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS.....	153
	Introduction to the Discussion.....	153
	Discussion of the Results.....	153
	Implications for Counselling.....	168
	Limitations.....	170
	Suggestions for Future Research.....	171
	REFERENCES.....	173
	APPENDIX A.....	180
	APPENDIX B.....	185
	APPENDIX C.....	190
	APPENDIX D.....	192

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
1.	RATE OF DIVORCES PER 100,000 POPULATION.....	2
2.	MEAN SCORES ON THE MYLSS ACCORDING TO SEX....	90
3.	PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION FOR RESPONSES ON THE MYMPS ACCORDING TO SEX.....	93
4.	T-TEST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS OF NC AND C SAMPLES.....	101
5.	CHI SQUARE FOR NC AND C RESPONSES TO SELECTED PERCEPTIONS.....	102
6.	T-TEST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS OF POST-PARENTAL AND PARENTAL GROUPS.....	103
7.	SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS FOR NC AND C SAMPLES OF PP AND P GROUPS.....	104
8.	COMPARISON OF MARITAL RELATIONS MEANS FOR NC AND C SAMPLES OF PP AND P GROUPS.....	104
9.	SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION FOR NC AND C SAMPLES OF PP AND P GROUPS.....	105
10.	COMPARISON OF LIFE SATISFACTION MEANS FOR NC AND C SAMPLES OF PP AND P GROUPS.....	105
11.	CHI SQUARE FOR COMBINED NC AND C SAMPLES OF PP AND P GROUPS AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS.....	106
12.	CHI SQUARE FOR NC AND C SAMPLES OF PP AND P GROUPS AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS.....	107
13.	SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND LAUNCHING GROUPS.....	109
14.	SCHEFFÉ MULTIPLE COMPARISON OF MARITAL RELATIONS MEANS FOR LAUNCHING GROUPS.....	109
15.	SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND LAUNCHING GROUPS.....	111

Page

16. CHI SQUARE FOR EP, LP AND P's RESPONSES TO SELECTED PERCEPTIONS..... 112

17. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS FOR NC AND C SAMPLES AND LAUNCHING GROUPS..... 113

18. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION FOR NC AND C SAMPLES AND LAUNCHING GROUPS..... 114

19. CHI SQUARE FOR NC AND C SAMPLES OF LAUNCHING GROUPS AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS..... 116

20. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND MYMPS # 17..... 117

21. COMPARISON OF MARITAL SATISFACTION MEANS FOR MYMPS # 17..... 117

22. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND MYMPS #18..... 118

23. COMPARISON OF LIFE SATISFACTION MEANS FOR MYMPS #18..... 118

24. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND MYMPS #19..... 119

25. COMPARISON OF LIFE SATISFACTION MEANS FOR MYMPS #19..... 119

26. T-TEST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS FOR SEX..... 120

27. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS FOR NC AND C SAMPLES AND SEX..... 121

28. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION FOR NC AND C SAMPLES AND SEX..... 121

29. CHI SQUARE FOR COMBINED NC AND C SAMPLES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES..... 122

30. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN..... 123

31. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN..... 123

Page

32. MEANS FOR MARITAL RELATIONS AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN..... 124

33. MEANS FOR LIFE SATISFACTION AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN..... 124

34. CHI SQUARE FOR NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS..... 125

35. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND DURATION OF THE MARRIAGE..... 126

36. MEANS FOR MARITAL RELATIONS AND DURATION OF MARRIAGE..... 126

37. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND DURATION OF MARRIAGE..... 127

38. SCHEFFÉ MULTIPLE COMPARISON OF LIFE SATISFACTION MEANS AND DURATION OF MARRIAGE..... 127

39. CHI SQUARE FOR DURATION OF THE MARRIAGE AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS..... 128

40. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND AGE..... 129

41. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND AGE..... 129

42. CHI SQUARE FOR AGE AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS..... 130

43. T-TEST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS FOR EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED WOMEN..... 131

44. CHI SQUARE FOR EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED WIVES AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS..... 132

45. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL..... 133

46. CHI SQUARE AND PROBABILITIES FOR MARITAL PERCEPTIONS AND OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL..... 133

47. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL..... 134

48. SCHEFFÉ MULTIPLE COMPARISON OF LIFE SATISFACTION MEANS AND OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL..... 135

Page

49. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL..... 136

50. CHI SQUARE AND PROBABILITIES FOR MARITAL PERCEPTIONS AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL..... 136

51. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL..... 137

52. SCHEFFÉ MULTIPLE COMPARISONS OF MEANS AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL..... 138

53. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND INCOME..... 139

54. MEANS FOR MARITAL RELATIONS AND INCOME LEVEL..... 139

55. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND INCOME..... 140

56. MEANS FOR LIFE SATISFACTION AND INCOME LEVEL..... 140

57. CHI SQUARE FOR INCOME LEVEL AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS..... 141

58. T-TEST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS FOR SOCIAL PARTICIPATION..... 143

59. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND EXTENT OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION..... 144

60. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND EXTENT OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION..... 144

61. SCHEFFÉ MULTIPLE COMPARISON OF MARITAL RELATIONS MEANS AND EXTENT OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION..... 145

62. CHI SQUARE AND PROBABILITIES FOR MARITAL PERCEPTIONS AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION..... 145

63. T-TEST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS FOR VOLUNTEER WORK..... 146

64. CHI SQUARE AND PROBABILITIES FOR MARITAL PERCEPTIONS AND VOLUNTEER WORK..... 147

Page

65. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND CHURCH INVOLVEMENT..... 147

66. MEANS FOR MARITAL RELATIONS AND CHURCH INVOLVEMENT..... 148

67. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND CHURCH INVOLVEMENT..... 148

68. MEANS FOR LIFE SATISFACTION AND CHURCH INVOLVEMENT..... 148

69. CHI SQUARE FOR CHURCH INVOLVEMENT AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS..... 150

70. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS AT THE .05 LEVEL FOR THE HYPOTHESES TESTED..... 152

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		Page
1.	Distribution of husbands' occupational levels for noncounselled and counselled samples	71
2.	Distribution of wives' occupational levels for noncounselled and counselled samples	73
3.	Distribution of occupational levels for noncounselled and counselled samples	75
4.	Graphical representation of mean scores on Marital Relations for launching groups	110
5.	Graphical representation of mean scores on life satisfaction and launching groups	111
6.	Graphical representation of mean scores on Marital Relations for NC and C samples and launching groups	114
7.	Graphical representation of mean scores on life satisfaction for NC and C samples and launching groups	115

CHAPTER I

THE STUDY IN PERSPECTIVE

Introduction to the Study

Nature of the Problem

Because people are living longer, marriages are able to survive the departure of the last child more so than they did 70 years ago (Deutscher, 1964; Peterson, 1973). Hence, couples in their 40's and 50's who have launched all their children can expect to spend another 20 or 30 years of married life together. This period of life is generally referred to as the empty-nest period (Christensen, 1950); the postparental period (Axelson, 1960; Cavan,1969); or the stage in the life cycle when children leave the home (Glick, 1947). In essence, the postparental period is that stage in the life cycle when children are no longer regular members in the home and the parents have not yet reached "old age" (Axelson, 1960). These parents are therefore generally categorized as middle aged.

One would expect the future prospect of another 20, 30 or even 40 years of married life to be a historical and momentous event for middle-aged couples (Peterson, 1973; Troll, 1971). An examination of Canadian statistics, however, suggests that middle-aged divorce as opposed to middle-aged bliss is on the increase. In 1974, for example, 4,755 couples, whose marriages had lasted between 20 to 24

years, were granted divorces while only 3,051 couples, with marriages of the same duration, were granted divorces in 1969 (Canada Year Book, 1975). Albeit that these figures represent only a small proportion of the total number of divorces granted in Canada, specifically between 10 and 15 per cent, it is significant to note that the number of individuals seeking termination of their long-standing partnership has in fact increased, as is indicated by the accelerated rate of divorces per 100,000 population as presented in Table I.

TABLE I

RATE OF DIVORCES PER 100,000 POPULATION

	Rate of Divorce					
	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
Duration of Marriage						
20-24 Years	14.52	17.20	16.37	16.75	17.70	21.60
25-29 Years	10.94	11.95	10.98	11.64	12.42	14.83
30 + Years	10.79	11.04	10.10	11.06	11.37	13.79
Total	124.20	139.80	137.60	148.40	166.10	200.60

(Statistics Canada, 1976)

The slight upsurge observed in the rate of divorces

in 1970 compared to those in 1969 appears to reflect the relaxation in the 1968 divorce law. Rather than exhibiting an actual increase,a distorted effect likely prevails as a result of the legislation change. Marriages which dissolved immediately following the change in divorce legislation for instance, were probably those which could not be dissolved under the previous legislation (Canada Year Book, 1973, p.203). Apart from this apparent unnatural rise in 1970, the data presented for the ensuing years suggest that the rate of divorces within each prolonged marital period is in fact increasing, although moderately.

It appears, moreover, that the majority of these divorces are granted to individuals in the early stages of the postparental period. Greenleigh (1974) and Peterson (1973) state that divorces are less likely to occur as the length of the marriage increases. By observing the decreasing rate of divorces granted to individuals in Canada as the length of the marriage increases, this statement is confirmed. The data therefore suggest that once the launching of the children has occurred, the parents' marriage is put to the test (Kerckhoff, 1976; Le Shan, 1973), and the excuse of staying together for the sake of the children is no longer valid (Greenleigh, 1974). Some marriage counsellors believe that this child-centeredness in marital ideologies accounts, in part, for the rising number of middle-age divorces (Fengler, 1973). This

upsurge in middle-age divorce, coupled with Peterson's (1973) prediction that the number of divorces granted to individuals in the postparental period will increase, arouses curiosity and interest for acquiring insight into the middle-aged postparental couple.

Prevalent research regarding these individuals has generally been concerned with three specific areas: the phenomenon of middle age itself (Deutscher, 1964; Edwards & Klemmack, 1973; Glenn, 1975; Gravatt, 1953; Greenleigh, 1974; Hain, 1974; Kerckhoff, 1976; Neugarten, 1968; Vedder, 1965); the life satisfaction of the middle aged (Bell, 1975; Neugarten, Havighurst & Tobin, 1961; Rose, 1955; Stinnett & Hayes, 1971); and the marital relations of the middle aged (Bossard & Boll, 1955; Burr, 1970; Cuber & Haroff, 1963; Figley, 1973; Fried & Stern, 1948; Hicks & Platt, 1960; Luckey, 1966; Peterson, 1968; Rollins & Cannon, 1974; Rollins & Feldman, 1970; Stinnett, Carter & Montgomery, 1972; Stinnett, Collins & Montgomery, 1970). These areas, however, have not been thoroughly investigated simultaneously. Due to certain circumstances which prevail in this particular period of life, neither individual life satisfaction nor the husband and wife relationship can be overlooked. The launching of children, for example, may have a pronounced effect on the couples' attitudes towards their lives as well as their marriages. The likelihood that maximum earnings have been reached and that retirement is in the near future may also influence the couples'

reactions to life and marriage. Physiological changes too, specifically the onset of aging may contribute substantially to the couples' perceptions of their lives and marriages. Because such biological, sociological and psychological factors are believed to be so intricately interwoven in influencing the middle-aged couples' marriages and lives, the need to research both areas, that is, marital relations and life satisfaction at the same time is evident.

The research findings surrounding middle-aged couples, however, are contradictory in nature. Some investigators of middle age believe that this period of life is painful (Gruenberg, 1950; Levy & Munroe, 1943; Lewis, 1945), while others believe that it is a peaceful time with new found freedoms (Christensen, 1950; Deutscher, 1964; Fried & Stern, 1948). More recent investigators have adopted a developmental approach, suggesting that this period of life constitutes change, challenge and perhaps personal growth as a result of particular life events and biological changes (Erikson, 1950; Greenleigh, 1974; Kerckhoff, 1976; Kimmel, 1976; Le Shan, 1973; Rappaport, 1976; Schaie & Gribbon, 1975). Middle age for these researchers is seen as a "half-way house" (Bradbury, 1975) or a midpoint in life since it is a time for reflection and decision making which is independent of painful or peaceful experiences.

Investigations of middle-aged couples' marriages are also replete with controversy. Some studies report

that older couples consider their marriages to be either as satisfactory or more satisfactory than previous years (Bossard & Boll, 1970; Fried & Stern, 1948). Others state that of the satisfactory marriages, most had been satisfactory from the beginning and the unsatisfactory had always been unsatisfactory (Fried & Stern, 1948). Additional studies support the contention that satisfaction declines over the years (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Pineo, 1961; Safilios-Rothchild, 1967; Townsend, 1957), while others report that neither a spike nor decline exists in marital satisfaction (Rollins & Cannon, 1974; Rollins & Feldman, 1970).

Such controversy and polarized viewpoints appear to arise as a result of poor measurement techniques or inadequate experimental designs. By comparing the Blood and Wolfe (1960) study, which advocates that there is a decline in marital satisfaction over the years, with the rise in marital satisfaction obtained in the Rollins and Feldman (1970) study, Rollins and Cannon (1974) pointed out that the former's measurement techniques were poor. In their analysis of these two major studies Rollins and Cannon (1974) decided that the Blood and Wolfe (1960) composite measure of marital satisfaction was lacking in "face validity". Subjects responding to the Blood and Wolfe index of marital satisfaction, for instance, were asked to rate different aspects of marriage in terms of relative

importance. By weighting satisfaction scores to individuals who were disappointed with something important and weighting dissatisfaction scores to individuals who were disappointed with something unimportant, the Blood and Wolfe procedure gave low scores to individuals who should have had higher scores and vice versa. Such an illogical scoring procedure was incompatible with the conceptual definition on which the index was based. Rollins and Cannon (1974), in an attempt to rectify this inconsistency, employed a revised scoring system to portions of the Blood and Wolfe scale. In so doing they discovered that most aspects of marital satisfaction followed the U-shaped curve found by Rollins and Feldman (1970). It is significant to note, however, that the subjects on which this analysis was based were middle class Mormons. Because this religious sect has a strong family orientation, it is highly doubtful that they would be anything but satisfied at this stage of their lives. Bossard & Boll (1955) demonstrated as a result of face to face interviews that the 40's and 50's were problematic ages, although this was not confirmed by the measuring techniques employed. Consequently, their quantitative data were not congruent with their qualitative data. Stinnett and Hayes (1971) capture the limitations of the measurement indices used in the research of middle-aged couples through a critical analysis. These investigators discovered that the tests used are usually designed for other age

groups; that the tests are not specific in their examination of the areas of life satisfaction and that the tests measure various areas of satisfaction on the basis of only one question.

A majority of the studies are limited further in their use of the sampling criteria since such studies tend to use samples which are readily accessible and therefore not necessarily representative (Barry, 1970). Middle-aged couples of the middle class, for instance, have been extensively examined (Burr, 1970; Cuber & Haroff, 1963; Deutscher, 1964; Rose, 1955; Stinnett & Hayes, 1971). Examinations based on selected populations, moreover, fail to provide answers to certain questions because they lack a control group. The study by Stinnett and Hayes (1971), for example, reflects this weakness since the investigators merely examined a sample of middle-aged couples who were the parents of university students. These investigators did recommend, however, that different segments of the middle-aged population be examined in future research. Other studies are restricted by their use of the dependent variable, specifically in terms of satisfaction versus dissatisfaction, adjustment versus maladjustment, or success versus lack of success. Divisions of this sort are often found to be dependent upon investigator judgement or bias which inevitably leads to data distortion (Scanzoni, 1966).

Furthermore, such divisions lend themselves to directional investigations. By observing stable marriages, for example, factors conducive to success are usually examined while the examination of dissolved marriages (i.e. divorced couples) usually leads to the discovery of variables conducive to marital failure (Mathews & Mihanovich, 1963). Albeit that marital stability and divorce determine the inclusion into these opposing categories, it does not logically follow that the stable marriage is free from problems, maladjustment or dissatisfaction. This assumption has often been neglected in the literature (Barry, 1970) and as such leads one to question the verifiability of past investigations and future investigations should they fail to make that distinction.

One might conclude therefore that there is a need to explore the marital and life satisfaction of middle-aged couples in a way that is conducive to comparative analysis. Comparisons of stable versus unstable groups of married couples, however, introduce problems of exclusion and overmagnification, since the examination of stable marriages inherently implies satisfaction, efficiency or goodness while examinations of unstable marriages (i.e. the separated or divorced) imply

failure or that the marriage was bad (Scanzoni, 1966).

Based on the relevant assumption that intact marriages experience problems and frustrations that do not necessarily end in divorce or separation (Barry, 1970; Cuber & Haroff, 1956; Hicks & Platt, 1970; Landis, 1963; Monahan, 1962), it would be reasonable to assume that an examination of the intact marriage could provide a significant amount of information about life satisfaction and marital relations. Furthermore, by comparing an intact, although not necessarily happy, group of middle-aged couples with a group of middle-aged couples who are also within an intact marriage but who have openly admitted to being caught up in some sort of crisis by entering counselling with professionals, a framework could be presented that would help one understand why some middle-aged marriages remain organized and why some become disorganized. That is to say, there is a need to explore the differences in marital perceptions and life satisfactions of two types of organized marriages which are operationally distinguished from one another through a theoretically significant variable - counselling. The absence of counselling would not necessarily imply that these couples are not experiencing problems but rather that as a group they may experience them to a lesser degree than couples who seek therapeutic assistance. Clearly, if a middle-aged couple's problems are due to the fact that the couple is

middle aged, the counselled group and noncounselled group would be very similar. Further, if the initial stage of the postparental period represents the decisive turning point of whether the couple will continue with the marriage or end it through divorce, an examination of middle-aged couples prior to and following the launching of the last child is required. Such comparisons, however, have seriously been neglected in the literature surrounding middle-aged postparental couples.

General Statement of the Problem

The need for the present thesis, therefore, essentially arose out of the criticisms reviewed above. Because the methodological weakness in past investigations of middle-aged couples appeared to produce, in part, the inconsistencies in the literature and because the Canadian statistics cited earlier reflected an increase in the number of middle-aged couples seeking termination of their marriages, the present investigation was undertaken. In essence, this study ensued from the foregoing, that is, on the inconsistencies in the literature, on the need to examine middle-aged postparental couples and on the necessity of studying their life satisfactions and marital relations simultaneously.

The basic questions under investigation were: What areas of life are the most and least satisfying for

middle-aged couples? What variables, sociological or psychological are related to life satisfaction? Upon which factors, sociological or psychological, is perceived marital happiness dependent? Does a group of counselled middle-aged couples possess similar attitudes towards life and marriage as a noncounselled group of middle-aged couples? Do husbands and wives experience similar perceptions and satisfactions? Does child launching affect the couples' attitudes towards life and marriage? Does the number of children in the family affect the couple's perceptions and attitudes towards life and marriage? Are education, occupation and income related to the couples' reported satisfactions in marriage and life?

Purpose of the Study

Taking into account the aforementioned questions, the general purpose of this study was to examine the variables influencing marital relations and life satisfactions among couples whose marriages were of relatively long standing and who were primarily in the postparental period of life. By employing a framework which could explore the attitudes of a counselled and noncounselled group of couples who were either entering or in the postparental stage, a better understanding and appreciation of the difficulties and joys encountered in this period of life were anticipated.

Outline of the Study

This chapter was concerned with outlining the purpose of and the need for the present investigation. Chapter II contains a review of the literature related to postparental and middle-aged couples. It is followed by the third chapter which focuses on the methodology employed in the study. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the results of the study, its implications, and its limitations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction to the Middle Years

Middle-aged individuals have received considerable attention within the past two decades. In view of the fact that the research focusing on the middle years was practically nonexistent prior to the 1950's (Deutscher, 1964; Hicks & Platt, 1970), a vast number of studies has accumulated within such a brief time span. Such a newly awakened interest appears to be attributed to basically two dimensions. On the one hand, alterations in the population have resulted in an increased number of middle-aged individuals. Better health and higher standards of living have pushed the middle agers to the forefront of attention. On the other hand, a change in the context of personality development has stimulated interest in a new field of psychology called life span development. Earlier theories conceived that the personality had crystalized by early adulthood and remained fairly static until death. More recent theories have focused on the idea that every stage in the life cycle or every segment of life in the entire life span is composed of certain unique challenges.

This newly adopted approach has resulted in the popularity of comparing middle age with adolescence because

both periods of life are believed to provide "developmental encouragement" for facing the great ontological questions of, "Who am I?" and "Where am I going?" (Kerckhoff, 1976). Such neologisms as "middlescence" (Hodgekinson, 1974; Levinson, 1973) or "midolescence" (McMorrow, 1974) are used to refer to middle age in order to facilitate a direct comparison between the middle years and adolescence without going into elaborate explanations as to how the word was derived. In essence, the advocates of these neologisms believe that the middle-aged individual wonders at some point in his middle years as to what the second half of his life is for. By equating middle age to adolescence these patrons hold that an "identity crisis" occurs in both periods. Hence, it has been popular to attach the term "crisis" to middle age because it represents a turning point that can lead to an improvement or deterioration of the personality (Greenleigh, 1974).

Such viewpoints echo one of the few theories which encompasses all of adulthood. The theory of adult development laid down by Erik Erikson (1950) is such a case in point. The growing interest in the psychology of adults has resulted in a renewed interest in Erikson's theory. He believes that an individual must solve one or more conflict situations as he passes through eight stages from infancy to old age. These solutions are made

on the basis of internal choices and by confronting each developmental issue as it occurs. That is, by confronting a crisis and by resolving it, the individual has gained in perspective and ego identity. The internal choice which is made at midlife, Erikson calls generativity. Essentially, generativity is a concern for and commitment to the next generation. If generativity is reached, that is, if the individual has passed his midlife crisis, the ensuing middle years are usually peaceful and secure. If the individual does not resolve his crisis, however, "a regression from generativity to pseudo-intimacy which is punctuated by moments of mutual repulsion takes place, often with the prevailing sense and objective evidence of stagnation" (Erikson, 1950, p. 231). In other words, a midlife crisis missed leads to stagnation, a state in which the individual's vitality sinks too low for further development (Bradbury, 1975).

In terms of research application, however, Erikson's theory is believed to be too vague and hence is of little use in testing explicit characteristics of adult personality changes (Hodgekinson, 1974). How does one determine, for example, that an individual has made a commitment to the next generation? The fact that one is a parent, that is, that one has produced or reared children does not confirm that there is an interest in parental responsibility for all of mankind. What relevance then does Erikson's (1950)

theory have to the present thesis? Inherent in any developmental concept is the belief that individuals are constantly growing and changing in their attitudes and beliefs, regardless of age. For the purposes of the present study a developmental approach is therefore implied. Furthermore, since there is a general consensus that age related changes arise out of the internal as opposed to external aspects of the personality, Erikson's developmental approach relates to the framework presented in the present investigation. Although developmental issues per se are not examined, the self-reports employed in the present investigation are believed to be the best measure of determining an individual's perceptions because crisis issues are not believed to be readily apparent to the outside observer (Neugarten, 1968).

Kuhlen (1968) has reported that there are relatively few developmental data available. As a result, few empirical studies exist which test the phenomenon of the midlife crisis. Several theories have, however, arisen out of case materials and personal experiences. The purpose of this chapter is to present these viewpoints as well as cite the findings of major research regarding what happens to people in their middle years and in their longstanding marriages. It is assumed in the present

study that the difficulties the middle ager is likely to encounter when he reaches the middle years will have an impact on how he sees himself, how he evaluates his life and how he evaluates his marriage. In the interests of conceptual clarity, life satisfaction, marital relations, and the isolated variables which have been the focus of research and theories will be examined separately.

The Middle Years and Life Satisfaction

Erikson's (1950) idea that the solution of one or more nuclear conflicts adds a new ego quality to the personality is implicit in the rising theories of adult development. Le Shan (1973), for example, refers to middle age as the "wonderful crisis". Middle age for this theorist is a vital stimulus for growth because middle age is a time for challenging and redefining one's role in life. Le Shan's(1973) middle agers appear therefore to be the ones who have mastered the midlife crisis by having met the challenges of middle age successfully. Neugarten's (1968) examination of middle-aged individuals, moreover, showed that despite feelings of being "squeezed" between the demands of youth and the needs of the aged, middle agers, in addition, felt their own importance. Neugarten's (1968) middle agers felt that they were in

the prime of life and that they had a lot going for them.

Successful adaptation to the middle years can therefore be interpreted as a matter of maturity. The middle ager is believed to have the maturity to redefine his role in life because he has reached the age of opportunity (Havighurst, 1957; Tibbitts & Donahue, 1960). This claim to maturity and opportunity, however, Brayshaw (1962) believes only increases the distress that is felt by so many husbands and wives because "they (the middle agers) believe that as experienced people they should be capable of understanding and handling the difficulties which erupt in the middle years but they are often unable to do so" (p. 358). The promise of the prime of life is therefore often complicated by the anxiety over the loss of youth (Peterson, 1968).

On Men

Bergler (1954) also offers a pessimistic outlook by stating that middle age without conflicts is inconceivable, for the middle-aged man at least. He feels that the middle-aged male has a sudden discontent with everything, including his marriage, his job and his responsibilities. Because youth is not retrievable, Bergler (1954) sees the middle-aged man as a rebel attempting to return to his adolescence for a second chance at life but with the knowledge of his advanced years so as to avoid making the

mistakes he made before. Gravatt (1953) and Peterson (1968; 1973) share similar viewpoints. These theorists contend that the middle-aged man panics when he realizes that he is getting older; that he is losing his sexual appeal; and that he probably has not achieved what he hoped to achieve in his life. The panic turns to depression which, in turn, causes him to become bored with his aging wife. As a result, the middle-aged man turns to younger women, not to see if he is attractive enough to captivate them but rather if they are able to produce feelings in him (Bergler, 1954). The middle-aged man attempts to prove his virility as a way of expressing his own sexual uncertainty and despair (Bergler, 1954; Gravatt, 1953; Peterson, 1968; Waller & Hill, 1951). The fact that infidelity reaches its peak when men are in their early 40's (Kinsey, 1950) may provide some merit to this viewpoint. Brayshaw (1962) also reported that out of 2,500 individuals who were married eighteen years or more, infidelity was ranked second to health as the main difficulty in the subjects' present period of life.

A study conducted by Levinson (1973) showed that men fantasize about various aspects of their lives when in their middle years. For example, such questions as, "What would it be like to be married to someone else?" or "What would it be like to enter a different occupation?" are

often seriously pondered upon. Greenleigh (1974) found that such fantasies may in fact become realities. Greenleigh (1974) discovered that because middle-aged men tended to show more concern for what they missed out on in life than for what they achieved, secret lives evolved as attempts to compensate for the men's disillusionment. These secret lives included such things as extramarital affairs, private activities on weekends, or avocations that proved more important than vocations. The middle age crisis for men therefore appears to be characterized by their reverting to the bizarre, irrational and sexually confused state of the adolescent (Bergler, 1954; Greenleigh, 1974; Levinson, 1973; Waller & Hill, 1951).

At the same time occupational strivings are believed to have a pronounced effect on the man's evaluation of his situation. Although highly educated men may still be moving up the occupational ladder in their 40's and 50's, general consensus has it that most men have reached their optimal occupational position in their late 30's. Hodgekinson (1974) stated that if the middle-aged man had not reached the occupational position he had hoped to attain by the time he reached his middle years, his problem would be one of a revision downwards, while the individual who had reached his goal or neared it had to establish a whole new pattern

of aspirations for fulfillment. The resolution of either issue may prove difficult for the middle-aged male.

Consequently, in addition to his sexual uncertainty the middle-aged man may be faced with a "midcareer crisis" (Levinson, 1973). Levinson (1973) found that the resolution of this career crisis was crucial to the man's future development, since the crisis would only come back in greater severity when the man reached his 50's if he avoided confrontation. Deutscher (1959) too reported that man experienced considerable maladjustment with this phase of his life because he felt constantly compelled to prove his virility and was depressed by middling occupational achievements.

On Women

The midlife crisis for women is often viewed in terms of a biological condition - the menopause, or a situational event - the launching of children. The burden of growing old is believed to fall more heavily on the middle-aged woman than on her male counterpart, because she is given such an overt sign as the cessation of the menses - a signal that her ability to bear children has ended (Le Mon, 1949). Shanas (1968) found that women, more so than men, are apt to say that their

health is not good at this stage. Perhaps, the inconveniences which usually arise with the arrest of menstruation, such things as hot flushes and loss of lubrication in the vaginal area which may cause discomfort during intercourse (Le Mon, 1949; Masters & Johnson, 1966), may attribute to this finding. The menopause, however, was found to be a rather insignificant factor in understanding the middle-aged woman in a study conducted by Neugarten (1973). Neugarten (1973) examined 100 women between the ages of 43 to 53 in order to determine whether or not the climacteric changes were biologically based in the personality. Her negative findings in conjunction with the knowledge gained from Masters and Johnson (1966) and the technology employed in the utilization of certain hormones which help alleviate conditions associated with the menopause, suggest that cessation of the menses has been employed too often to explain the problems which can erupt in the middle-aged woman.

Rather, psychological and sociological perceptions of the aging process would appear to be more applicable in comprehending the middle-aged woman's evaluation of her life situation. Prominent mass media and commercialized advertising constantly expose the middle-aged woman to our youth and beauty orientated culture.

Women therefore have been saturated with the view that to be old is to be undesirable. Such feelings of undesirability go hand in hand with feelings of rejection (Long, 1976). Berry (1976),moreover, feels that the aging woman is constantly on guard not to portray signs or symptoms of age and as a result of her efforts to do so, she is often tense, anxious and nervous (p. 130). Her perceptions of aging therefore appear to have a stronger effect on her evaluations of herself and her life than does the menopause.

Children leaving the home may further assist in our understanding of the midlife crisis for women. Deutsch (1945) gives a psychoanalytic interpretation by drawing a parallel between the departure of the child from the home, that is, the cutting of the apron strings, with the cutting of the umbilical cord. Breaking this bond between mother and child is believed to induce possible trauma for the mother which, in turn, constitutes a necessary change in adjustment on her behalf. Other researchers tend to believe that mothers as opposed to fathers feel the void more acutely when the children leave the home, because mothers have generally assumed the major role in child rearing. By losing one of her principal vocational roles, the woman's major source of fulfillment has ended, and she, as her male counterpart,

is faced with a type of midcareer crisis.

Le Mon (1949) believed that women developed a sense of loss when their children left. Departure of children was considered a critical time for the majority of the 109 middle-aged women in Bossard and Boll's (1955) study. Blood and Wolfe (1960) as well as Sussman (1960) discovered that women do in fact experience a role crisis when their children have been launched and Rose (1955) reported that women are generally unprepared for this change in their lives.

Axelson (1960), however, discovered that in spite of the middle-aged woman's experience of increased loneliness when her children left, the postparental period was reported as being as satisfying as the parental period. The question therefore arises as to whether or not the launching of children does negatively influence the middle-aged woman's evaluation of life. Investigations aimed at answering this question have tended to provide the information that the grieving or sense of loss on the part of the mother is outweighed by feelings of a sense of freedom or newly found gratifications (Greenleigh, 1974; Neugarten & Datar, 1974). The problem with this conclusion, however, is the manner in which the investigations have been conducted.

Axelson's (1960) comparison of postparental couples

with parental or quasi parental couples is such a case in point. Axelson (1960) defined his postparental group on the basis of whether there were any children under the age of 18 in the home. The possibility of these postparental couples having children over the age of 18 in the home and thereby not truly representing a post-parental group was not discussed by this investigator. Glenn's (1975) study was afflicted with the same limitation. He used data from three Gallup surveys and two national surveys, basing his definition of the post-parental group on whether any child under the age of 17, 18 or 21 was still in the home. Older children therefore could have been in the household and as such, Glenn's postparental women may not have experienced the "empty nest syndrome" because they were not truly in the empty nest stage. Although Glenn's (1975) findings suggested that there was no enduring decline in the psychological well-being of his postparental mothers, his data were contaminated further by the fact that his postparental group in four of the five surveys included a number of couples who never had children.Since other studies have reported that couples without children generally report greater satisfaction than couples with children (Burgess & Cotrell, 1939; Lang, 1932; Renee, 1970), Glenn's data were not surprisingly biased towards this end.

Deutscher (1959) resolved this problem by defining his postparental group in terms of the total absence of children in the home. Only three couples out of a total of 49 reported that the postparental stage was worse than preceding phases. Consequently, Deutscher (1959) decided that the postparental period was not a time of great difficulty. Deutscher (1959), however, relied exclusively on the postparental couples' reflections of their previous life stage since he did not compare the postparental group with a parental group. This lack of comparison notwithstanding resulted in Deutscher's discovery that postparental women evaluate this period in their lives more favourably and more unfavourably than do their husbands. That child launching constitutes a critical issue for the middle-aged woman is therefore apparent. However, a systematic probe into a comparison between a true postparental group as defined by Deutscher (1959) and a parental group may assist further in the understanding of the middle-aged woman's midlife crisis.

On Middle Age

Opinions regarding the midlife crisis for the middle-aged individual are divided. On the one hand, the crisis is seen in a pessimistic light. It is a difficult period and it is inevitable. On the other hand, the midlife crisis is viewed optimistically. It is a wonderful time for

opportunity. Such polarized viewpoints are complicated further by the absence of any distinct definition of middle age (Greenleigh, 1974). What is middle age? General consensus tends to view the middle-aged person as being between the ages of 40 and 60 or even 65. A chronological definition, however, would rate the midlife period as half the life expectancy which could result in an age range from 36 to 55.

Early research studies employed a 35 to 65 year age range, while the more recent investigations employed a 40 to 60 range. Consequently, the answer to the question of what is middle age goes unanswered. Another question arises instead. Should a definition of middle age be chronological or functional? The chronological estimate is usually only a rough indicator of aging, while entry into a given system like child launching tends to place the individual in a historical context which represents his progress through a role in the process of aging (Elder, 1975). Neugarten (1968) believes age differences are inconsistent and therefore prefers to define middle age in terms of situational or developmental variables. As Peck (1968) points out, however, a definition based exclusively on a historical or developmental event is also misleading. Some individuals launch their last child at the age of 60, for instance, while others launch their

last child at the age of 40. Surely, these individuals are not experiencing the launch in the same way! Hence, a biological condition like age in conjunction with certain situational events like child launching might clarify the controversy regarding the definition of middle age which, in turn, might clarify the confounding research results.

Section Summary

In essence, middle age is a stage in adult development which signifies a time for reflection and change, leading to personality improvement or personality deterioration. The middle ager must be prepared to cope with possible stressful events at this time in his life. Physical changes appear. Some friends, some acquaintances and, frequently, parents die around this time. The career is usually at its peak (for the middle-aged male at least) and children are leaving the home. That problems could erupt in this period of life as a result of just becoming middle aged will invariably have an effect on the marital relationship. It would appear that the adjustment required of the middle-aged person, whether it be an adjustment to the fact that the children have left or that occupational aspirations have not been reached, or to the realization that one is growing old depend to a large extent on the stability and

quality of the marital relationship. The problems encountered can either place a severe strain on the husband and wife relationship or bring them emotionally closer.

If life satisfaction is related to marital satisfaction, it might well follow that satisfaction in one will lead to satisfaction in the other and vice versa. The tabulation of an individual's life satisfaction with marital satisfaction, however, has not been a major concern in research. Rose (1955) in his attempt to examine the relationship between the life satisfaction of middle-aged individuals and various aspects of marriage found that the intimacy of interpersonal relationships correlated highly with life satisfaction. Stinnett and Hayes (1971) employed a similar design by constructing a life satisfaction scale for middle-aged couples which measured various aspects of life, including marriage. Of their 80 middle-aged couples, the majority reported that the middle years were satisfying and that the greatest area of satisfaction was with the marriage relationship. Due to the lack of comparison with a control group, Stinnett and Hayes (1971) were not able to detect if dissatisfaction with life was related to dissatisfaction with marriage. Hence, we are brought to the

second aspect being considered at present, an exploration of the data provided by the marriage research surrounding middle-aged couples.

The Middle Years and the Marital Relationship

Examinations of couples in their middle years raise the question as to whether aging affects the marital relationship. That is, does happiness in marriage increase or decrease as the couple ages? Several studies have addressed themselves to this same question, but when focusing on marriage in the middle years the data are very confounding.

Included in this review of marriage research are studies that have been concerned with the subjective feeling of satisfaction in marriage. Although the various investigations have employed such diverse labels as satisfaction, adjustment, happiness, perceptions, or success, the findings generally represent the respondents' subjective evaluations of their situation through self-report questionnaires or personality inventories.

On Longitudinal Data

Any analysis of happiness ratings over the years must examine marriages of relatively long standing. Only one major longitudinal study has, however,

addressed itself to the marital relationship. Burgess and Wallin (1953) investigated couples during their engagement and then again following four or five years of marriage. They found a gradual decrease in marital happiness over the four to five year period. Pineo (1961) studied 400 of the original 847 individuals following twenty years of marriage, and his data revealed that there was a general descent in marital satisfaction and adjustment which he referred to as a process of disenchantment or disillusionment.

A small scale investigation by Paris and Luckey (1966) showed a similar pattern of decline in marital satisfaction over a six year period. On the basis of Locke's Marital Adjustment Scale and the Terman Self-Rating Scale, these investigators examined 31 unsatisfied couples and 31 satisfied couples in 1957 and again in 1963 in an attempt to determine if satisfaction changed over time. Albeit that their data showed the satisfied couples to decrease in happiness and the unsatisfied to increase in happiness, the general trend observed was a decrease in marital satisfaction.

On the whole, the longitudinal data suggest that couples who have been married for a long time are less satisfied than couples who have been married for a shorter time. The results of these studies and the

growing interest in the development of marriages over time have intrigued several other investigators. Unfortunately, those individuals who are interested in examining the total life cycle are restricted in their investigations by the fact that the subjects might outlive the investigator or that the subjects themselves will not be available to finalize the investigation (Schaie & Gribbon, 1975). Hence, the majority of recent studies are cross sectional or retrospective in nature. In spite of the fact that these types of investigations are subject to the questionable reliability of self-reports or social desirability, they do provide substantial contributions to the knowledge surrounding marriage in the middle years.

On Cross Sectional Data

Cross sectional studies generally compare different age groups by employing subjects who fit into the various stages of the life cycle. Studies which utilize the family life cycle as a classificatory scheme to allocate couples generally emphasize the developmental level of the eldest child in order to make their stage divisions (Duvall, 1967). Some of the findings of these cross sectional studies support the conclusions drawn from the longitudinal research, while others are not as

explicit.

The cross sectional study by Blood and Wolfe (1960), for example, included 909 women who were involved in different stages of the life cycle. Although the major portion of the investigators' data was concerned with the structure of power in a conjugal relationship, a portion of their data referred to variations in marital satisfaction over the life cycle. By weighting scores of reported satisfaction with the relative importance wives attached to various aspects of their marital relationship, Blood and Wolfe (1960) found that their respondents grew more dissatisfied with the advancing years.

Luckey (1966) in another investigation also found that her data tended to support the theory of disenchantment. By correlating the subjects' scores on the Terman Self-Rating Scale and the Locke Marital Adjustment Scale with the number of years married, she found that respondents saw their spouses in a more negative light as the length of the marriage increased. By dividing his sample into groups according to the length of time married as opposed to the developmental level of the eldest child, Lang (1932) also found a decline in marital happiness over a 16-year period.

Rollins and Feldman (1970) used the family life

cycle as a medium of investigation by including 799 middle class individuals in the various stages. These investigators also discovered a decline in marital satisfaction but noticed that the decline was not systematic. A curvilinear relationship tended to characterize the data since the decline commenced with the beginning of marriage, continued to the preschool years where it leveled off until an increase was observed at the empty nest stage. Rollins and Cannon (1974),in their investigation of 1600 Mormons who represented each stage of the life cycle, found a similar curvilinear pattern to that of Rollins and Feldman (1970). This pattern was consistent regardless of whether they employed the Blood and Wolfe (1960) measure, the Rollins and Feldman (1970) or the Locke-Wallace measure. A curvilinear pattern was also detected by Gurin, Veroff and Feld (1960) who found a decrease in marital satisfaction in the early stages of the life cycle and a leveling off at the later stages. The lowest point in marital satisfaction for Gurin et al.'s (1960) subjects was in the empty nest stage which is in direct contrast to the report submitted by Rollins and Feldman (1970). Because Gurin et al. (1960) did not use separate analyses for their male and female subjects, a direct comparison with the Rollins and Feldman (1970) data is

limited. In addition, Burr's (1970) examination of 147 couples who represented all stages of the life cycle revealed a curvilinear pattern with the school stage constituting the low point in marital satisfaction.

Thus considerable data have been gathered on how marital satisfaction varies over the life cycle but the research findings are somewhat confusing. On the one hand, the data suggest that marriages get worse as the duration of the marital period lengthens and on the other hand, the data suggest that there are specific periods in the life cycle where dissatisfaction is greatest. There is consistent indication that decline in marital satisfaction is evident in all the studies reported, yet the decline is more stage specific than systematic. In other words, there are specific periods in the life cycle where marital dissatisfaction is greatest. Such lack of consensus as to where this drop in satisfaction occurs restricts both comparison and generalization. Since conclusions regarding the marital satisfaction of middle-aged couples cannot be systematically drawn from such conflicting data, it is important to investigate this stage of the life cycle independently.

On Stage Specific Data

Examinations of middle-aged couples per se

generally follow two methods. One method allows investigators to examine a group of middle-aged couples by evaluating the quality of their present relationship on the basis of questionnaires or personality inventories. The other method analyzes the nature of the current relationship by comparing it to how the respondents refer to their past. In so doing, these investigators must rely exclusively on the reports presented by the couples as to what their marriages were like before they entered their middle years. This type of information constitutes the retrospective studies.

Cuber and Haroff's (1963) investigation of middle-aged couples employed the first method. They interviewed 437 husbands and wives who were between the ages of 35 and 55 to determine the quality of their relationship. By developing a taxonomy of marriages in which to place these individuals, these investigators discovered that there were relatively few good husband and wife relationships in this age range. Their classificatory system was composed of two basic types of marriages: the utilitarian which included the "conflict-habituated" (fight all the time) and the "devitalized" (apathetic but satisfied) and the intrinsic type which included the "passive-congenial" couples (passively content - spouse not important), the "vital" (exciting - spouse is

important) and the "total" (multi-faceted). These investigators found little meaningful interaction among their middle-aged couples because the majority represented the utilitarian marriage. They therefore concluded that very few marriages in the middle years were good ones.

Fried and Stern (1948) used the second method in their investigation of middle-aged couples. They interviewed 75 Canadian husbands and wives who were over the age of 50. Each respondent was asked to discuss his married life in detail. The judgment of marital satisfaction was essentially determined by the question , "If by some miracle you could push a button and find that you had never been married, would you press that button?" (Fried and Stern, 1948, p. 32). The subjects' responses to this question determined their present state of happiness, while a question regarding the development of their marriage over the years determined the state of past happiness. Fried and Stern (1948) discovered that 48.7 per cent of their 75 respondents reported that their marital relationship at the time of the interview was satisfactory, while 51.3 per cent reported that it was unsatisfactory. Of significance in this study was the discovery that subjects who reported current dissatisfaction considered that their marriages were

always poor, while satisfied couples stated that their marriages had always been happy. Fifty-two per cent of the couples, however, proclaimed that their relationships deteriorated as they grew older.

Section Summary

Data concerning couples in their middle years as being a distinct group suggest that individual differences and individual circumstances are involved. On the basis of the findings cited in this section it would appear that some individuals are better able than others to meet the problems which erupt in the middle years. But which people are dissatisfied with life and marriage and why are they dissatisfied? One procedure to follow in answering these questions would be to examine two groups of middle-aged couples, particularly a group which openly professed to be experiencing difficulties and a group which had made no such commitment. An examination of a counselled group versus a noncounselled group could provide such a framework. Examinations of divisions of this sort have unfortunately been restricted to other age groups (Locke, 1951; Mathews & Mihanovich, 1963) or to a small sample size (Eisenberg & Zingle, 1975). On the basis of the results found in those investigations, it is feasible to assume that the middle-aged couples

seeking counselling would demonstrate less satisfaction with daily living and with marital relations than couples who do not seek counselling.

The present investigation is therefore primarily concerned with investigating the evaluations that middle-aged couples have regarding their marriages and their lives by examining a counselled group of middle agers and a noncounselled group. Because of the paucity of research bearing on the comparisons between counselled and noncounselled groups of middle agers, the current inquiry will attempt to discern whether a counselled group of middle agers exhibits less satisfaction with life and marriage than a noncounselled group. By making a further division within these two groups, that is, by dividing the counselled and noncounselled middle agers into categories which include both postparental and parental groups, this inquiry will attempt to contribute to a more specific understanding of the marital relations and life satisfaction of middle-aged couples.

Aside from this systematic probe into the differences between parental and postparental and counselled and noncounselled groups, it is assumed in the present investigation that certain variables are capable of

influencing the couples' evaluations regardless of the group they are in. Research findings have indicated that there are several correlates of life satisfaction and marital satisfaction. These studies have provided the beginnings of descriptions of possible variables which are related to the favourable and unfavourable evaluations of life and marriage. The following section is therefore concerned with these findings and will provide the basis for some of the hypotheses to be employed in the present investigation.

Variables Influencing Evaluations of Life and Marriage

The hypotheses to be employed in the present investigation are generally concerned with the existence and direction of certain independent variables with the dependent variables of life satisfaction and marital perceptions. The variables listed below will be presented in a manner which clearly illustrates the direction that the hypotheses in the present study will follow. The significance of these variables is to help explain what factors and what combination of factors might contribute to the differences between postparental and parental couples who are or who are not receiving counselling.

On Children

The idea that children and happiness in marriage

are synonymous has been dispelled in several studies. First, with respect to the number of children in the family, past investigations have shown that couples with more than two children are not as happy as couples with fewer or no children (Burgess & Cotrell, 1939; Lang, 1932). More recent studies reiterate this finding. Hurley and Palonen (1967), for instance, found that the higher the ratio of children in the home the less satisfying was the marriage. Nye, Carlson and Garrett (1970) also discovered that a woman's satisfaction with life drops after she has two children and her satisfaction with her spouse drops after she has four children. Hence, it would appear that the greater the number of offspring in the family, the less the satisfaction.

Second, studies which examine the postparental period (all children launched) with the parental period (some children home) generally report that the post-parental period is more rewarding. Blood and Wolfe (1960), for instance, found a decline in satisfaction immediately following the arrival of the first child and discovered that the lowest point in satisfaction occurred when grown but unlaunched children were in the home. Feldman's (1964) data suggested that a low point in satisfaction existed when couples were in the process of launching children, that is when they were in the

stage immediately prior to the postparental stage. Horn (1976) in his study of 2164 adults who were in various stages of the life cycle showed that the general feelings of satisfaction dropped after couples had their children and rose when the children left home. Since Glenn (1975) and Deutscher (1959) reiterate the finding that the postparental period was rated as more satisfying than the period preceding it, it would appear that couples with children in the home will exhibit less satisfaction than couples who have launched all their children.

In the third place, since Axelson (1960) discovered that women experience a significant increase in loneliness when the children have left home, it would be plausible to assume that the time of the departure of the last child may influence reports of satisfaction. In other words, couples who have recently launched their last child may conceivably evaluate their situation differently than couples who have been in the postparental stage for a considerable time. Despite the fact that Glenn (1975) found that the women in his sample did not manifest a decline in psychological wellbeing following the departure of their children, he proclaimed that the majority of the women had been in the postparental period for some time. Hence, the influence of short term effects

was not evaluated. On the basis of these two studies it would be reasonable to suppose that couples who have launched their last child most recently will experience less satisfaction than couples who launched all their children earlier.

On Sex

The sex of the individual appears to have contributed substantially to the nature of responses regarding evaluations of marriage and life. Hicks and Platt (1970) in their review of marriages in the 60's concluded that husbands and wives differ in assessing the basis of marital satisfaction. That is to say, the variables which make one member of the conjugal pair content are not necessarily the same variables which make the other member content. It is argued in the present study that marital and life satisfactions have different meanings for men and women. Recent investigations have shown that particular life events within and outside the family inevitably influence the couple's perceptions of life and marriage. Rollins and Feldman (1970) discovered that men are influenced by occupational events and by events which precede and follow the presence of children, while women are influenced in their evaluations of life and marriage by the presence of children. Women, for instance, exhibit

dissatisfaction while raising children but exhibit satisfaction before the arrival of children and following their departure (Rollins & Feldman, 1970). Men show a similar pattern to women in this regard, yet tend to exhibit the greatest degree of dissatisfaction when they are anticipating retirement (Rollins & Feldman, 1970).

Spreitzer, Snyder and Larson (1974) who drew their sample of 1500 individuals over the age of 18 from the National Data Program for the Social Sciences at the University of Chicago discovered that women reported higher degrees of happiness than men. Stinnett and Hayes (1971) also found in a sample of couples where the age range was primarily between 40 and 54 that women received higher mean subtest scores in each of seven life areas as measured by the Middle Years Life Satisfaction Scale. Even Pineo (1961) found that husbands were more prone to the process of disenchantment within marriage than wives. Hence, one could deduce that men in their middle years will demonstrate more dissatisfaction with life and marriage than their female counterparts.

On Age

In a previous section the writer made reference to

theories and studies which advocated that the middle years can be a crisis period for some individuals (Bergler, 1954; Berry, 1976; Brayshaw, 1962; Bossard & Boll, 1955; Gruenberg, 1950; Long, 1976). Based on the reports made by these investigators, it would be logical to assume that individuals who are just entering the middle year period would experience more frustration and hence less satisfaction than individuals who have passed the initiation phase and are approaching old age.

In an attempt to examine the relationship between age and marital satisfaction, Spreitzer et al. (1976) discovered a curvilinear relationship between the two. Their data suggested that marital satisfaction was high when the couple was less than 34 years of age; that it declined by the time the couple was between the ages of 35 and 44; that it reached a low point during the ages of 45 to 54; and rose again when the couple was in the 55 to 64 year period. Similar curvilinear relationships between age and marital satisfaction were implied in the studies by Rollins and Feldman (1970) and Rollins and Cannon (1974). The low point in marital satisfaction observed by these researchers tended to occur in the stage of the life cycle when grown but unlaunched children were in the home. Through inference, the age of the couple at this stage could be estimated as being

similar to the low period, that is the 45 to 54 year age range discovered by Spreitzer et al. (1976) because adolescent children usually have middle-aged parents. In addition, Renee's (1970) discovery that couples are less likely to express dissatisfaction with their marriages as they grow older, makes it possible to postulate that younger middle-aged couples will express more dissatisfaction with life and marriage than older middle-aged couples.

On Duration of Marriage

Basic conclusive data regarding the relationship between marital duration and marital satisfaction are scarce. Of the studies in existence, polarized viewpoints exist regarding whether or not satisfaction decreases as the marital period lengthens. Some investigators have indicated that as the length of the marriage increases, the degree of satisfaction declines (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Lang, 1932; Luckey, 1966; Pineo, 1961), while others report that satisfaction declines from the beginning of marriage until the time that the children leave home, whereupon a rise in satisfaction characterizes the longer marital period (Burr, 1970; Gurin et al., 1960; Rollins & Cannon, 1974; Rollins & Feldman, 1970). Closer examination of these opposing viewpoints

suggests that the earlier prolonged marital period is more susceptible to a decline in satisfaction than the later marital periods. The subjects in the Blood and Wolfe (1960) study, who represented the extreme of the life cycle, that is the retired group, were not as adequately represented as the other stages. Had there been a larger portion of women in this category, results might have resembled the curvilinear relationship between duration of marriage and marital satisfaction that was discovered by other investigators. Albeit that Pineo's (1961) examination of couples after twenty years of marriage depicted a decline in satisfaction, it is questionable as to what sort of relationship could exist after 40 or 50 years of marriage.

The previous chapter also made reference to the fact that the highest ratio of middle-aged divorces in Canada occurred during the 20 to 24 year marital period. Because the rate of divorces per 100,000 population decreased as the middle-aged marital period lengthened, it would appear that factors influencing the couples' decision to abandon their longstanding relationship are being confronted in the early middle-aged marital period. Employing duration of marriage as an independent variable in examining middle-aged couples may give some indication as to when the problems in a marital relationship are

prominent. Consequently, on the basis of the foregoing analysis of past research and Canadian statistics, it might be reasonable to assume that the shorter the marital period the greater the dissatisfaction.

On Social Participation

Activity theory which was originally presented by Maddox in 1963 has been enthusiastically adopted by the many researchers who have been concerned with the phenomenon of successful aging (Antonucci, 1974; Peck, 1968). Simply stated, Activity theory promotes the principle that social interaction is an essential ingredient in the adjustment process for the aging individual. Proponents of this theory therefore believe that successful adaptation to the reality that one is growing old is directly related to the extent of one's involvement in extracurricular activities, because social participation is seen as a basis for obtaining and maintaining self-esteem and satisfaction (Antonucci, 1974). Although Activity theory has generally been employed in understanding retired couples, it can easily be incorporated into the understanding of middle-aged couples. Deutscher (1959) and Peterson (1968), for instance, both state that the middle-aged couple is confronted with a vacuum when the children depart. Because the couple's time and energy have previously been devoted

to the rearing of children, it must now be redirected when the children have gone. In order to fill the void left by the children's departure, Peterson (1968) believes that middle-aged couples must adopt new patterns of activities.

Several empirical studies have supported this contention. Bell (1975) found a weak but positive association between life satisfaction and voluntary community participation. Bull and Aucoin (1975) in their examination of aged couples also discovered a positive relation between social participation and evaluations of life satisfaction. Furthermore, a study conducted by Edwards and Klemmack (1973) provided similar evidence since subjects who were actively involved in voluntary associations tended to respond favourably to their life situation. Rose (1955), moreover, found that the degree of life satisfaction for the middle-aged woman was a function of the degree to which she was able to assume another role or other activities. The wife's as well as the husband's formal social participation was found to be positively associated with life satisfaction. Pineo (1961) also observed that leisure activities dropped significantly from the time of a couple's engagement until twenty years of marriage. Since Pineo's (1961) data suggested that there

was a decline in marital satisfaction, the association between lack of social participation and marital dissatisfaction seems evident. It could therefore be assumed that couples who are actively engaged in social or voluntary activities will evaluate their marriages and life situations more favourably than couples who are not so engaged.

On Wife's Employment

A woman's employment in conjunction with her marital relationship and satisfaction with life has received considerable attention over the years. An early study conducted by Axelson (1963) showed that poor marital adjustment existed on the part of the husband when the wife worked outside the home. By analyzing 122 responses Axelson (1963) concluded that a husband believed that a working wife neglected her children and that she threatened her husband's role as the bread winner. At the same time, however, Axelson (1963) discovered that husbands were more receptive to the idea of a working wife compared to results obtained in previous investigations. Axelson (1963) concluded that a time lag between the acceptance of new social roles for women and the acceptance of joint child rearing responsibilities contributed to the qualitative change between her results

and past investigations.

With respect to women in the age range which is of concern in the present investigation it would appear that for women whose major role was child rearing, the adoption of a new role, for example, the employed wife once the children have departed, would constitute personal satisfaction which, in turn, could only reward the marital relationship. In their investigation of couples over the age of 50, Fried and Stern (1948) found that women who returned to work following the departure of their children had not only renewed their husband's respect for them but had also achieved enough economic independence to contribute to the improvement of their marital relationship. Rose (1955) found that a greater proportion of satisfied women, specifically 76 per cent, compared to dissatisfied women, specifically 64 per cent, were employed outside the home at paid jobs. His conclusion was that employed women were more satisfied with their situation than unemployed women. These findings are congruent with the theory laid down by Peterson (1968) which states that the problems of middle age are somewhat different for women who are gainfully employed than for those women who have stayed at home and focused

on their children. On the basis of these studies it would appear that employed women will perceive their marital and life situations in a more favourable light than would unemployed women.

On Socioeconomic Status

Research studies regarding the influence that socioeconomic status has on life or marital satisfactions have generally failed to provide a true picture of the relationship. Such general statements as the ones provided by Bell (1975) or Edwards and Klemmack (1973) which assert that socioeconomic status is positively associated with life satisfaction restricts the type of valuable information that level of education, type of occupation and amount of income could provide. One is forced to scan the researcher's article in order to ascertain how he has defined socioeconomic status. Since researchers tend to employ different indices, one is also compelled to review the scales in order to estimate their reliability and validity. Even more difficult is determining the meaning of socioeconomic status when the researcher has failed to clarify the method on which he based his divisions. Status is just too elusive a term.

Classificatory schemes for social positions

furthermore are not consistently utilized in the marriage research. Renee (1970), for example, employed a white collar versus blue collar category, while Burr (1970) determined the class position of his middle class respondents on the basis of their residence through census tracts. Because class and status have been known to be used interchangeably although they are not necessarily equivalent, the criticism arises that, if a class structure or a status hierarchy exists, it must be bounded and ordered into clearly recognizable entities (Otto, 1975). Such is not the case in our society and to say that an individual is middle class or upper class or of high socioeconomic status or of low socioeconomic status does not tell us much about why he is satisfied with his life and marriage. Social class and social status are elusive concepts.

Rather, explorations into the components which would produce socioeconomic status or social class would appear to provide more pertinent information on life satisfaction and marital satisfaction than studies which have merely employed a classificatory scheme. In Luckey's (1966) examination of the influence that education had on 80 married couples, she showed that 75 per cent of her subjects had attended college. Her sample was therefore a highly select group in terms

of education, yet she was able to discern that even among the well educated the higher the education the more satisfaction. Renee (1970) also discovered that couples whose incomes were over $10,000 per annum were happier than couples with less income.

Independent measures of the three major measures of social class and status have provided significant information to the literature on marriage and life satisfaction. Blood and Wolfe (1960), for instance, found that level of education was closely related to marital satisfaction. But they also discovered that although the nature of the husband's occupation and the amount of the family income were generally associated with the wife's marital satisfaction, declines in satisfaction were detected when the income was especially high. This type of information might not have been discovered had Blood and Wolfe (1960) employed a purely demographic approach to stratification. They were able to conclude that the wife became dissatisfied with her marriage when the husband became so preoccupied with his occupation that he neglected his spouse. Such inference from the Blood and Wolfe (1960) data gives a qualitative interpretation that is generally absent in studies which merely employ classificatory schemes. In addition,

Gurin et al. (1960) discovered that the better educated tended to be happier but that they had more feelings of inadequacy and more problems than the less well educated. These researchers suggested that with more education marriage apparently becomes more central to one's life, a factor which also gives it a greater potential for satisfaction or stress.

Since the studies which have employed education, occupation and income as independent determinant factors of marital and life satisfaction have provided significant qualitative information, the present investigation will focus on these variables as opposed to socioeconomic or social class concepts. From the research evidence cited it would appear that the following statements characterize the relationships among these variables of income, education and occupation: the higher the family income, the greater the satisfaction; the higher the occupational level and the higher the educational level of the respondents, the greater the satisfaction.

Operational Definitions

Before embarking on a presentation of the hypotheses to be tested in the present investigation it is imperative that certain terms be clarified. This

section is concerned with the definition of the terms which will constitute the major portions of the hypotheses to be employed in the present investigation and which will frequently be referred to in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. These terms are independently described below.

Middle Age

The middle-aged individual was defined as being between the ages of 40 and 60. All couples involved in the current project were randomly selected from a population of middle-aged couples with the 40 to 60 age span being a major operational criterion. All couples participating in the study were therefore considered to be middle aged on the basis of this chronological definition.

Postparental Couple

Postparental couple (PP) was designated as a category for the middle-aged individual in order that he could be defined in terms of both chronological and functional definitions. Postparental couples were therefore those middle-aged couples who had launched all of their children from the home at the time of this investigation. That is to say, the postparental group of middle-aged couples was a group which had no child,

regardless of his age, living in the home when the present study was undertaken.

Early Postparental Couple

Early postparental couples (EP) were considered to be those postparental couples who had launched their last child less than one year ago from the time of this investigation.

Late Postparental Couple

Late postparental couples (LP) were those postparental couples who had launched their last child between one and nine years ago from the time of this study.

Parental Couple

Parental (P) was an additional category in which to place the middle-aged couples in order that they be defined in terms of chronological and situational events. Parental couples were those middle-aged couples who had launched at least one child but who had some of their children residing in the home with them.

Noncounselled Couples

The noncounselled couples included a random selection of middle-aged couples in the city of Edmonton who were either in the postparental or parental phase of their lives. These couples had informed the researcher that they were not receiving counselling in any form from any agency or private practitioner at the time of this investigation. It

was not assumed that because these couples were not receiving counselling they were happier than couples who were.

Counselled Couples

Counselled couples were those middle-aged couples who were either in the postparental or parental periods of life and who were currently receiving some form of marital or family counselling from the various therapeutic/counselling agencies or private practitioners within the city of Edmonton.

Life Satisfaction

In the present research investigation life satisfaction was defined by the individual's subjective evaluation of his situation in eight life areas as measured by the Middle Years Life Satisfaction Scale (MYLSS).

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction was defined in terms of the perceptions an individual had about his marital relationship. The perceptions or feelings the individual had about marriage were expressed in his responses to a multiple-choice questionnaire, entitled the Middle Years Marital Perception Scale (MYMPS). The individual's marital relations subscore on the MYLSS was also to represent marital satisfaction.

Social Participation

Social participation was believed to include extracurricular activities which middle-aged individuals engaged in, such as church related activities, community activities or volunteer work. Social participation was determined by the middle-aged individual's responses to questions on the MYMPS regarding the extent of his involvement in social, civic and church activities and also whether he did any volunteer work.

Family Income

Family income was defined as being the gross income earned jointly by both husband and wife. Six levels of family income were identified. These were: less than $7,999; $8,000 to $13,999; $14,000 to $19,999; $20,000 to $25,999; $26,000 to $30,999, and $31,000 or more.

Educational Level

Seven levels of education were distinguished according to the number of years of schooling the individual completed. These were: less than grade 8; completed grade 8 but did not attend beyond grade 9; attended highschool but did not graduate; graduated from highschool; attended college or university for

two or more years; graduated from four years college or university; completed more than four years of university training for a profession.

Occupational Level

Eight occupational classes or categories, herein referred to as occupational levels, were established for the present investigation by employing the Blishen Occupational Class Scale (Blishen, 1965). Blishen (1965) employed the numbers 1 to 7 to rank the various Canadian occupations with 1 representing the highest and usually professional occupational group, while 7 represented the lowest or unskilled occupational group. Class divisions in the construction of the scale were based on data from the 1951 census. Blishen (1965) used the average amount of income, the average number of years of schooling and the amount of prestige involved in the occupation as the basis for his classificatory scheme. For the purposes of the present investigation an eighth and therefore lowest area was included to represent the unemployed category.

Hypotheses for the Present Investigation

In accordance with the review of the literature surrounding marital relations and life satisfaction of

middle-aged couples, the following hypotheses were made concerning suggested relationships:

Major Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The sample of middle-aged couples who are receiving counselling will report less satisfaction with marriage and life than the sample of middle-aged couples who are not receiving counselling.

Hypothesis 2: Postparental couples will exhibit greater satisfaction with marriage and life than parental couples.

Hypothesis 3: Early postparental couples will demonstrate less satisfaction with marriage and life than either the late postparental couples or parental couples.

Hypothesis 4: Middle-aged couples who are satisfied with their lives will generally perceive the present state of their marriage favourably, while middle-aged couples who are dissatisfied with their lives will perceive their present marital situation unfavourably.

Subsidiary Hypotheses

Hypothesis 5: Middle-aged men will report less satisfaction with marriage and life than middle-aged women.

Hypothesis 6: Middle-aged couples with more than two children will report less satisfaction with marriage and life than middle-aged couples with one or two children.

Hypothesis 7: The shorter the length of the middle-aged marriage, the less satisfaction will be reported by middle-aged couples.

Hypothesis 8: The younger the middle-aged individual, the less his satisfaction with marriage and life.

Hypothesis 9: Middle-aged women who are gainfully employed at the time of this study will report higher levels of satisfaction with marriage and life than middle-aged women who are not employed.

Hypothesis 10: The higher the occupational level of middle-aged individuals, the greater their satisfaction with marriage and life.

Hypothesis 11: The higher the educational level reached by individuals, the higher their satisfaction with marriage and life.

Hypothesis 12: The higher the total family income, the greater satisfaction with marriage and life will be reported by middle-aged couples.

Hypothesis 13: Middle-aged couples who are actively engaged in social, voluntary or church activities will

report more satisfaction with marriage and life than couples who are not so engaged.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Introduction to the Design

The plan of the study with which this thesis was concerned involved the comparison of counselled and noncounselled groups of middle-aged couples by means of an analysis of their responses on questionnaires pertaining to life satisfaction and marital relations. By dividing these two major groups with respect to the presence or absence of children in the parental home, a comparison between the parental and post-parental couples' attitudes regarding life and marriage was also made.

In order to investigate the middle-aged couple's evaluations of life and marriage a population of middle-aged couples, who were willing to complete standardized questionnaires regarding their present situation had to be secured. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the method of securing the sample of middle-aged couples, to render an account of the instruments employed, and to present the procedure utilized in the present investigation.

The Subjects

Because a sample should represent as closely as possible the population for which it is intended (Wechsler, 1955), the researcher decided that certain selected characteristics would be representative of a population of middle-aged couples. Hence the five operational criteria selected by the researcher for the couples under investigation in the present study were: that they be married and living together; that they be between the ages of 40 and 60; that they have been married to the present partner for at least 15 years; that they have had at least one child, and that the launching of the last child had occurred not more than ten years prior to the time of this study. By regulating these criteria it was anticipated that a fairly representative sample of a target population of middle-aged couples would be forthcoming. Furthermore, by designating both a noncounselled sample and counselled sample of middle-aged couples, an even wider range of types of responses was anticipated.

At the same time, however, such a selection of couples fitting specified criteria restricted a more ideal random selection of middle-aged individuals.

Since it was both impractical and impossible to apply an unrestricted random sampling method to obtain the needed individuals, a modified sampling method was adopted to ensure that the samples for the present investigation would include representative proportions of people with various incomes, diverse educational levels and who were also from varied occupational groups. In so doing, attempts were also made to keep both the uncounselled sample and counselled sample demographically comparable. The importance of securing two sufficiently homogeneous groups was deemed essential in order that comparisons and conclusions relative to the middle ager's circumstances could ensue. This thesis has therefore focused on a select group of subjects, that is, on middle-aged couples for the purposes of securing their conceptions of life and marriage. A total of 80 middle-aged couples participated in this study, yielding a total sample of 160 individuals (N=160).

The Noncounselled Sample

Essentially two samples were identified. The non-counselled sample (NC) was drawn from middle-aged couples in the city of Edmonton who were not receiving counselling. This sample was comprised of subjects who were parents of former Edmonton high school students whose names appeared on the grade 12 computer print-out sheets in

1971. The grade 12 list was chosen with the belief that the parents of these students would most likely be in their middle years and obviously had at least one child. Hence, two of the five operational criteria had essentially been met before the subjects were approached.

By selecting names at random from these computer print-out sheets which represented Edmonton's ten public high schools, care was taken to select the sample in such a manner as to achieve an almost normal distribution of income, education and occupation. Two hundred and fifty possible subjects were identified on the computer print-out sheet, giving a total usable noncounselled sample of 40 couples (n=80). This noncounselled sample was divided into two groups of parental versus postparental categories according to the operational definitions previously described. Twenty couples comprised the parental category and twenty comprised the postparental category.

The Counselled Sample

The counselled sample (C) included middle-aged couples who were currently engaged in marital or family counselling at various agencies and offices of private practitioners in the city of Edmonton. By not being restricted to one particular agency or private

practitioner, a normal distribution in terms of education, occupation and income was expected. Twenty postparental and twenty parental couples were secured for this sample of counselled middle-aged husbands and wives.

Description of the Samples

The researcher's concern for obtaining samples which would be demographically comparable was essentially met. The average age for the noncounselled sample, for instance, was 51.40 years, while the average age for the counselled sample was 45.40 years. The standard deviationsfor the NC and C samples were 1.32 and 1.50 respectively. Albeit that the C sample tended to be younger than the NC sample, no significant difference was found between the two groups when employing the .05 level of significance. The mean age of the combined samples was 50.75 years.

The average length of the marital period for both samples was also similar in that no significant difference was found between the mean marital period of 29.98 years for the NC sample and 29.10 years for the C sample. A standard deviation of 1.80 for both samples revealed that there was little variability in the length of the marital period for the two

samples.

The average number of children for the NC sample was 3.63, while the average number of children for the C sample was 4.05. The samples were not found to be statistically different with respect to the number of children in the family. The average number of children for the combined samples was 3.84.

Occupational level 5 of the Blishen scale was found to be the largest group for both NC and C husbands as is indicated in Figure 1.

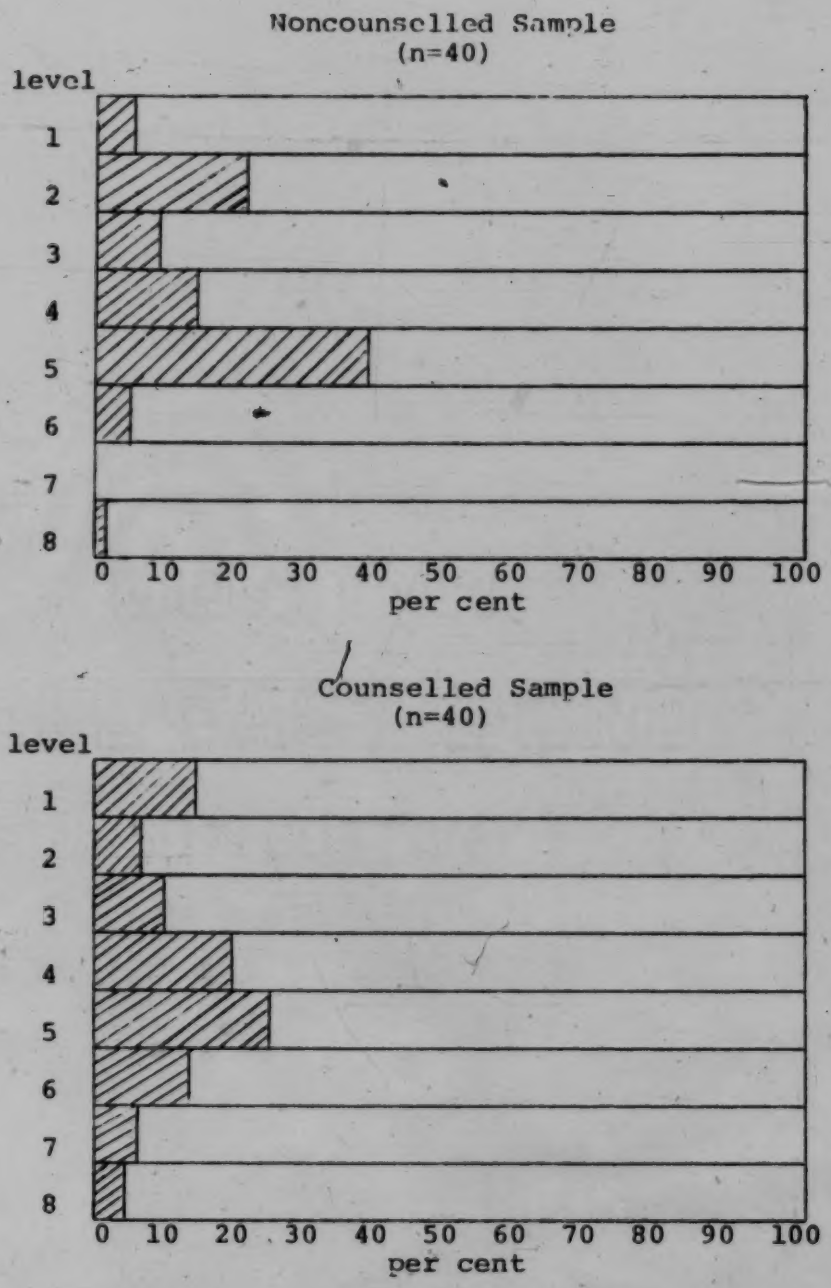

Figure 1. Distribution of husbands' occupational levels for noncounselled and counselled samples.

The mean occupational levels for the NC and C samples were 4.10 and 4.20 respectively. The difference between these means was not significant.

Occupational level 8 was the largest group for both NC and C wives as indicated in Figure 2.

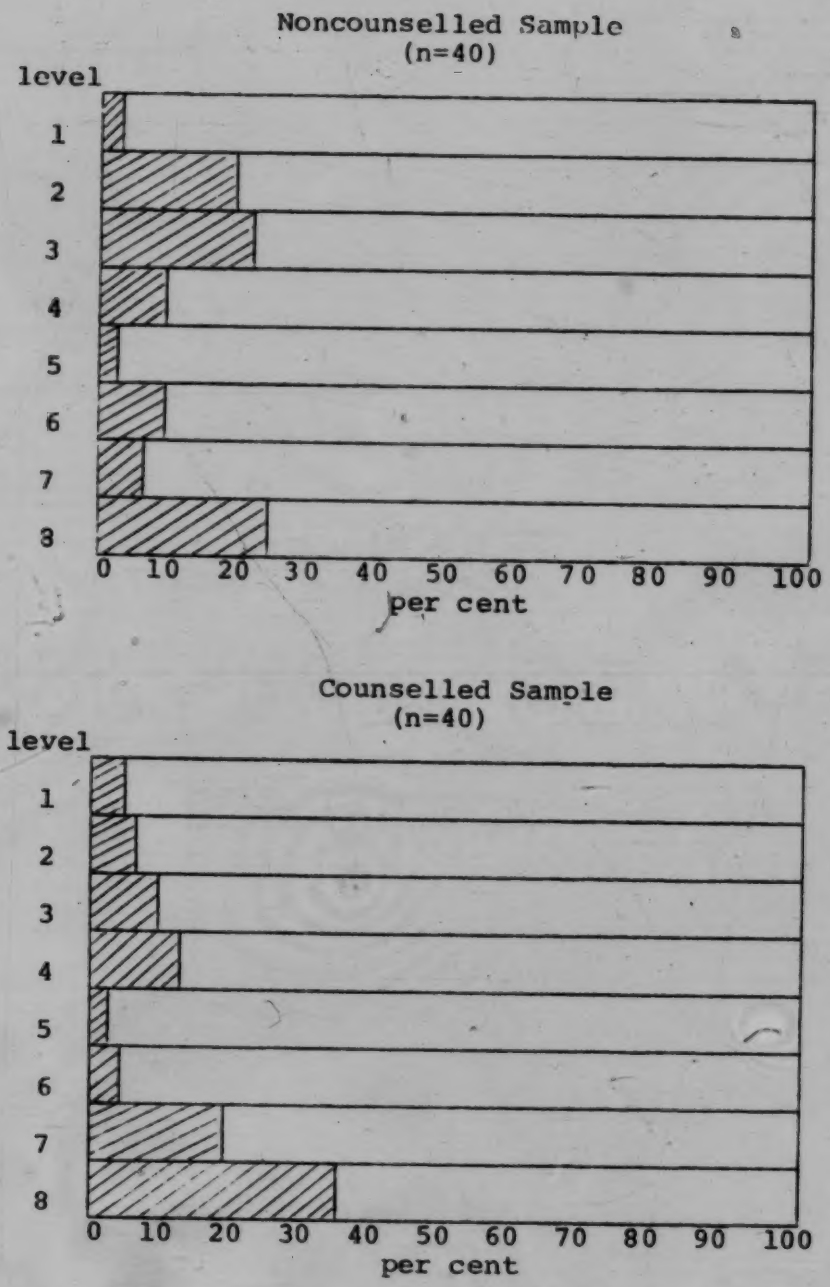

Figure 2. Distribution of wives' occupational levels for noncounselled and counselled samples.

The average occupational level for the NC women was 4.45, while 5.80 represented the occupational level for the C women. By employing the .05 level of significance the samples were not found to be statistically different with respect to the wives' occupational levels. By combining the occupational levels of both husbands and wives in Figure 3 with respect to their membership in the NC and C samples, level 5 was found to be the largest category for the NC sample.

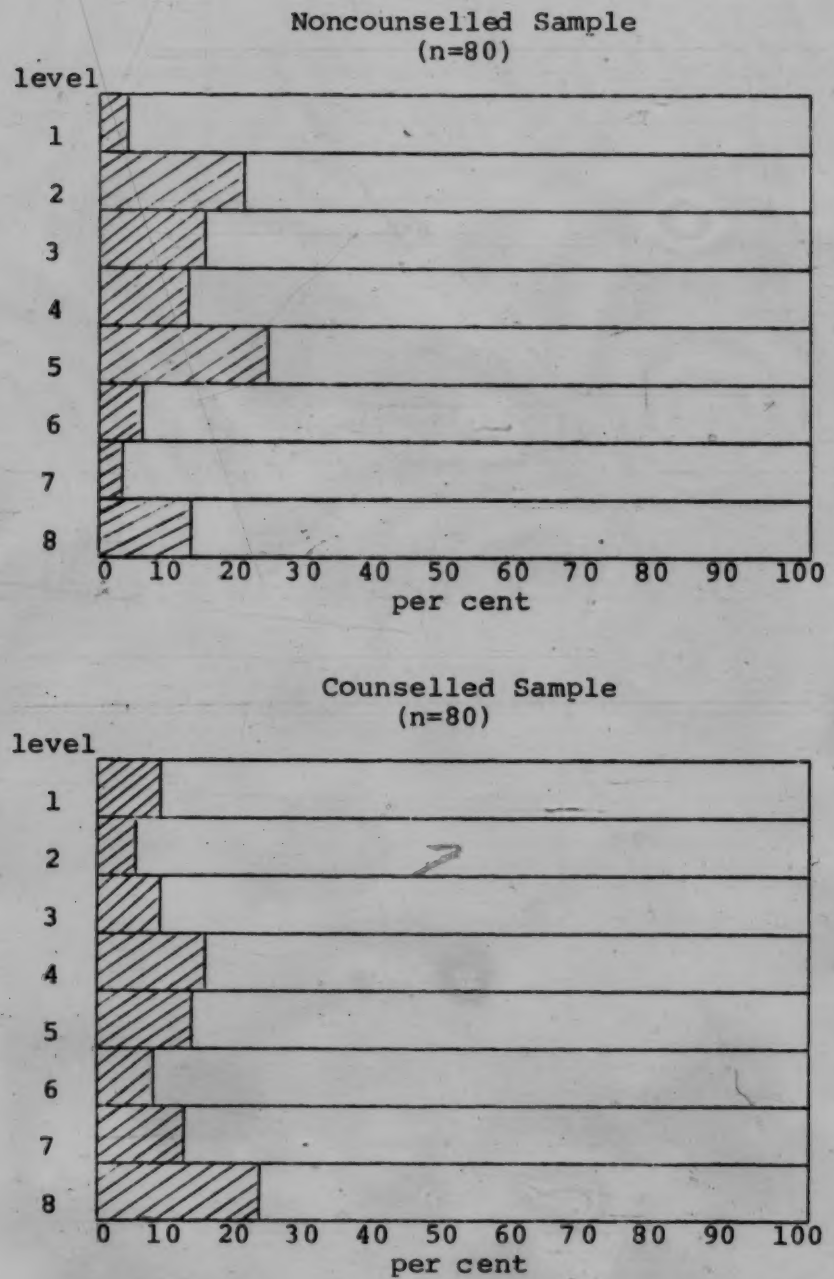

Figure 3. Distribution of occupational levels for noncounselled and counselled samples.

Level 8, on the other hand, was found to be the largest category for the C sample. This suggests that there were more unemployed individuals in the C sample than in the NC sample. The average occupational level for the NC and C samples when combining the sexes was 4.33 and 5.00 respectively. No significant difference was found between the two groups in terms of occupational level.

With respect to educational level, the samples were again found to be demographically comparable. The completion of high school was found to represent the average level of schooling for both NC and C husbands. Counselled wives, on the other hand, had fewer years of schooling on the average than did non-counselled wives, since the latter reported having completed high school and the former reported having attended but not graduated from high school. The difference between the average educational levels for the wives, however, was not significant.

In addition, income levels for both samples were comparable in that no significant difference was found between the mean amount of incomes for the two samples. The income category of $14,000 to $19,999 per annum represented the average level of earnings of both NC and C samples. This category was also reported as being representative of the average level of family income

for the residents of Edmonton (Statistics Canada, 1973).

In summary, the NC and C samples were found to be similar in terms of demographic variables.

The Instruments

Data pertaining to the middle-aged couples' evaluations of life and marriage were obtained from two questionnaires: The Middle Years Life Satisfaction Scale (Appendix A) and the Middle Years Marital Perception Scale (Appendix B).

Middle Years Life Satisfaction Scale

The MYLSS, designed by Stinnett and Hayes (1971), was employed in the present study in an attempt to ascertain which areas of life were the most and least satisfying for middle-aged couples. Essentially, the MYLSS is a self-report attitude inventory which is intended to measure the life satisfaction of the middle-aged individual. The content and format of this instrument are not unlike that of many Likert-type attitude scales. The test is comprised of 35 statements involving items that attempt to test life satisfaction at seven different levels. These levels or areas which are believed to reflect the life satisfaction of the middle-aged person are: marital relations; health;

standard of living; occupation, relations with children; leisure time and social participation; and self-concept. The respondent is required to grade his response to the 35 statements by circling one of the following categories: strongly agree (SA); agree (A); undecided (U); disagree (D); and strongly disagree (SD). The statements to which the subject is to respond are either clearly unfavourable or clearly favourable.

The construction and selection of the items in each of the seven areas were based on the test authors' review of the literature. Because this instrument is the only one of its kind at this point in time, that is, the only one which is specifically geared toward the middle-aged individual per se, it was deemed essential for the present investigation. It did, however, lack a life area which the researcher believed to be a crucial one for the middle ager - that is, aging. Therefore, the original MYLSS was slightly modified for the purposes of the present investigation by including five statements (numbers 36 to 40) to reflect the phenomenon of aging. The format and style of the original scale was maintained for this additional eighth life area. Thus the modified version of the MYLSS used in this study consisted of 40 items as opposed to the original 35 items.

Content validity of the original MYLSS was determined by presenting each statement on a card and

having all cards sorted by six professionals in the family life area into the seven existing categories. These specialists agreed 92.4% of the time that the statements belonged in the seven categories. Reliability of the items on the MYLSS was computed with the Spearman-Brown correction formula yielding a split-half reliability of .99, thus indicating high internal consistency.

Middle Years Marital Perception Scale

The MYMPS or the perception scale, employed in the present investigation, was an abridged form of the Older Person's Marital Perception Scale designed by Stinnett, Carter and Montgomery (1972). In the original questionnaire or Older Person's Marital Perception Scale respondents were asked to choose one of several alternatives for each of ten statements that best described their feelings. The ten basic questions regarding the respondents' perceptions of marriage pertained to the following: the individual's own marital happiness; whether his own marriage had improved or worsened over time; the happiest period of his marriage; whether he believed that most marriages became better or worse over time; the most rewarding aspect of his present marital relationship; the most troublesome aspect of his marital relationship; what he believed to be the most important characteristic of a successful marriage; what

he believed to be the most important factor in achieving marital success; the major problem in his present period of life; and the happiest period of his life. Because the responses to these types of questions were considered important for understanding middle-aged couples, the questions and the format of the Older Person's Marital Perception Scale were maintained for the MYMPS. However, since the original scale was designed for older persons like senior citizens, such alternative responses as "middle years" or "the present time" within one question became redundant when referring to middle-aged individuals. Hence, one of these items was omitted for the MYMPS and otherwise little alteration of the scale was deemed necessary.

The basic, yet implicit, premise underlying the original scale was the belief that it is more precise to refer to the marital perceptions an individual has than to ascribe to marital success or marital adjustment. Owing to this orientation the MYMPS or abridged version of the original scale was also not based on any distinct theory of marital success and therefore does not provide an assessment of the couple's overall marital adjustment. Rather, the MYMPS deals only with the individual's perceptions, that is, his feelings about marriage. Besides including these ten statements about the individual's feelings or perceptions of marriage, the MYMPS also

includes 16 fixed questions pertaining to the demographic and background information of the respondents.

Albeit that the senior test author employed the original questionnaire in one study (Stinnett, Carter & Montgomery, 1972) and portions of it in two others (Stinnett, Collins & Montgomery, 1970; Stinnett & Hayes, 1971), data concerning reliability and validity were unfortunately not reported. However, despite this limitation the MYMPS was still believed to be the best instrument available to measure the marital perceptions of middle-aged couples and was therefore used in the present study.

The Procedure

Noncounselled Sample

Methods of procuring the counselled and noncounselled samples of middle-aged couples were different. First of all, with regards to the noncounselled sample of middle-aged couples, the researcher approached both the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) and the Edmonton Separate School Board (ESSB) to request access to their 1971 grade 12 computer print-out sheets in order that the addresses of these students' parents could be obtained. Having secured only the EPSB's cooperation, the researcher placed herself in front of the first page of each of ten computer sheets which represented the ten Edmonton high schools of Bonnie

Doon, Eastglen, Queen Elizabeth, Ross Sheppard, Strathcona, Victoria Composite, McNally, Harry Ainley, M.E. Lazerte and Jasper Place. By allowing her index finger to fall randomly on a student's name, the researcher selected that student's name, address and telephone number. Once this first name had been chosen, every fifth name was selected thereafter. If the chosen student's name indicated that he was a nonresident of Edmonton or if he did not have a telephone number, the name immediately following it was selected. A total of 250 names were acquired following this method.

A cover letter printed on University letterhead (Appendix C) was addressed to the parents of each of the 250 students identified. The letter outlined the purpose of the investigation and assured the couple of anonymity should they be willing to participate. The letter also informed the couple that the researcher would be contacting them by telephone within two weeks of their having received the letter in order to arrange an interview time for them to complete the two questionnaires.

Seventy-nine, that is 31.6% of these letters had been returned unopened to the researcher, presumably because the family had moved. Of the remaining 171 possible couples the researcher was able to contact only 123 by telephone. Forty-eight couples or 19.2%

had therefore no longer maintained the same telephone number as listed on the computer print-out sheets. A total of 127 couples or 50.8% of the original 250 names which were identified were thus not contacted by the researcher.

During a telephone conversation with the 123 couples contacted, that is, with 49.2% of the original 250 identified, the researcher attempted to enlist their cooperation and determine through questioning whether they conformed to the necessary criteria. Only 29 couples, that is, 11.6% did not meet the criteria, while 54 couples or 21.6% refused to participate. If the couples met the operational criteria and if they were willing to participate in the study, the researcher arranged for an interview to take place, either in the subjects' homes or at the University of Alberta. The majority of the couples preferred that the researcher come to their homes to administer the questionnaires. A total of 40 couples were seen by the researcher following this procedure.

Three major problems were encountered with this method of enlisting the cooperation of middle-aged couples. In the first place, many couples were concerned about how the researcher had obtained their names. Due to the EPSB's wish to remain anonymous, the researcher was compelled to prepare a statement to the effect that

the couple would be satisfied with the response and that the EPSB would not be implicated as the source. By stating that the information concerning names, addresses, telephone numbers and approximate date of marriage were obtained from Canada census tracts, this problem was essentially eliminated as being one of great concern. The second difficulty bore upon the couple's preference to have the questionnaires mailed to their home as opposed to being personally presented to them by the researcher. Since standardized conditions were deemed essential for the purposes of this study, the couple was so informed and simultaneously reassured that anonymity would be respected despite the researcher's presence. Approximately one third of the contacted couples, however, refused to participate on the ground that the questionnaires would not be mailed. The third and principal problem appeared to be the middle-aged couple's tendency to be willing to participate only when "they had nothing to hide". That is to say, it was not known if the couples who participated felt that they had less to hide than those who did not participate. A "happiness" bias may therefore have been introduced into the study, since couples who were probably experiencing marital difficulties or who considered the researcher to be "too young to understand" tended to

avoid participation. Noteworthy as well was that few couples questioned the legitimacy of the investigation. This may have been due to the fact that the cover letter was printed on University letterhead and because both the researcher and the researcher's supervisor had personally signed each of the 250 letters.

Counselled Sample

With respect to the counselled sample of middle-aged couples, the researcher had mailed a similar cover letter (Appendix D) as the one sent to the noncounselled subjects to 25 agencies and 15 practitioners who reportedly dealt in marital and family counselling. These agencies and practitioners were identified by the Edmonton Telephone Directory and by the Directory of Community Services for Edmonton (AID). Within two weeks from the mailing date of this letter the researcher telephoned the counsellors involved in order to enlist their cooperation in using their clients to complete the two questionnaires.

Apart from the five major operational criteria for the couples under investigation, the only other specifications were that the middle-aged couples be willing to participate in the study and that they be receiving counselling at the time of their participation. No time limitation as to the length of time spent in

counselling was set, although the researcher was aware of the possibility that couples who had just entered counselling might have different perceptions of life and marriage than couples who had been in counselling for some time. The reason for refraining from this time limitation was due, in part, to the difficulties encountered in procuring the counselled sample of middle-aged couples.

A large portion of the counsellors contacted, for example, refused to participate in the study. A majority of these counsellors were concerned about the issue of confidentiality, while others felt that the results of the research would be of little use to them. In some cases the counsellors requested copies of the questionnaires, as well as the researcher's original thesis proposal which was submitted to the Department of Educational Psychology in October of 1976, before the matter could be discussed. In another case, a University Ad Hoc Ethics Committee was asked to approve of this research design in the form of a letter in order that the researcher could carry out the investigation with that particular agency. Personal interviews between the researcher and the prospective agencies in conjunction with mailed materials also occurred on several occasions.

In addition to the difficulties encountered in eliciting the cooperation of the counsellors, it was discovered that the clients of many of the agencies and private practitioners did not fit all of the operational criteria. Often the counselled middle-aged couples were found to be already in their second marriage or that they were no longer married as a result of a recent divorce or that they were no longer living together. If the counsellor did have couples fitting the criteria, however, he informed his clients about the research project during his counselling session with them and asked if they would be willing to complete two questionnaires in the presence of the researcher. If the clients agreed to participate in the study, the counsellor gave the researcher their names and telephone numbers. The researcher, in turn, telephoned the couples to arrange a convenient time and place for the appointment. Several clients preferred to complete the questionnaires at the agency's office, while others came to the University and still others preferred that the researcher come to their homes. Forty middle-aged counselled couples had been identified and hence a total of 80 husbands and wives participated in the study. Twenty of these 40 couples constituted the postparental group and the other twenty constituted the parental group.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Introduction to the Chapter

Certain questions regarding middle-aged couples were posited in the first chapter of this thesis and several hypotheses were postulated in the second chapter which the present investigation attempted to test. This chapter is therefore concerned with answering these questions and with examining each hypothesis in light of the results obtained. The final chapter will discuss these results in greater depth.

Treatment of the Data

The data gathered from the MYLSS and the MYMPS were transferred to data sheets and subsequently transposed to computer punch cards for analysis by the Division of Educational Research Services (DERS) at the University of Alberta. Essentially, the analysis of the data involved various combinations of non-counselled, counselled, postparental and parental groups and other variables to determine if differences in life satisfaction and marital perceptions existed. This was accomplished by subjecting the data obtained from the MYLSS to t-tests or one- and two-way analyses

of variance. When a significant difference was discovered among more than two groups whose source was not obvious, a Scheffé multiple comparison of means was carried out to test for the differences between all possible pairs of means in order to determine the direction of the obtained difference. The data obtained from the MYMPS were generally subjected to an analysis of frequencies using Chi square since the nature of this questionnaire was comprised of nominal data. Chi square was employed to discover whether significant differences existed between or among groups for the type of response given. The .05 level of significance was established as being indicative of a significant difference for all analyses of the data.

Results of Frequency Tabulations

One of the first questions posited in the first chapter of this thesis was: What areas of life are the most and least satisfying for middle-aged couples? In order to determine which areas of life were the most and least satisfying mean subscores of the MYLSS were obtained for both the noncounselled and counselled samples. Table 2 lists these mean subscores with respect to the sex of the subject and his membership in either of the two samples. The table also gives the mean subscores and total scores for the samples.

TABLE 2

MEAN SCORES ON THE MYLSS ACCORDING TO SEX

Item #	Life Area	Noncounselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)	Counselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)
1- 5	Marital Relations	18.25	18.43	18.34	15.38	13.90	14.64
6-10	Health	19.45	19.88	19.67	18.98	18.75	18.87
11-15	Standard of Living	19.50	20.18	19.84	19.13	19.53	19.33
16-20	Occupation	16.93	17.73	17.33	16.50	15.73	16.12
21-25	Relations with Children	20.88	21.28	21.08	20.08	20.30	20.19
26-30	Leisure Time and Social Participation	17.63	17.95	17.79	16.10	16.78	16.44
31-35	Self-Concept	20.25	18.23	19.24	20.00	18.23	19.12
36-40	Aging	16.80	15.53	16.17	16.63	14.40	15.52
1-40	Total Life Satisfaction	149.68	150.78	150.23	142.78	137.60	140.19

The questions on the MYLSS were scored in such a way that the response reflecting the highest degree of satisfaction was given the highest score (5), and the one showing the lowest degree of satisfaction the lowest score (1). The data therefore reveal that both males and females, regardless of the sample they were in, scored highest in the area of Relations with Children suggesting that this life area reflects the highest degree of satisfaction. Both males and females in the NC sample scored lowest in the life area of Aging, while the C sample scored lowest on Marital Relations. T-tests for correlated samples (Ferguson, 1971), however, indicated that the life area of Relations with Children was not statistically different from the life area of Aging for the NC sample, nor was it significantly different from the life area of Marital Relations for the C sample. Although the NC middle agers appeared to show more concern about growing old and the C sample showed more concern over their marital relationship, the difference between these means for these respective life areas was also not significant. Examination of Table 2 also suggests that noncounselled women tend to score similarly to their husbands on the highest and lowest life areas of life satisfaction as do the C women with their husbands.

Another question posited in Chapter 1 was related

to the notion of whether or not husbands and wives perceived their marriages in the same way. A detailed percentage distribution regarding noncounselled and counselled husbands' and wives' perceptions of their marriages as measured by the MYMPS is presented in Table 3. By scanning this distribution it appears that the NC sample of middle-aged husbands and wives generally view their present marital relationship favourably and that as a group they tend to perceive their marriages as improving in marital happiness over the years. The counselled sample,on the other hand, tends to view the present marital situation unfavourably and perceives it as deteriorating in happiness over the years. Despite such differences, both samples reported that companionship was the most rewarding aspect of their middle-aged marriage. An inability to express true feelings and the relationship with the spouse were reported as being the major difficulties in this period of life for the counselled sample, while the NC sample tended to report that it had no trouble at all or that the greatest concern was children's welfare. Mutual respect was considered to be the most important characteristic of the successful marriage by all groups with the exception of the counselled males who reported that the expression of true feelings was the most important characteristic of a successful marriage.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION FOR RESPONSES ON THE MYMPS ACCORDING TO SEX

Perception	Noncounselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)	Counselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)
Own Marital Happiness						
very happy	40.00	45.00	42.50	12.50	12.50	12.50
happy	27.50	25.00	26.25	22.25	27.50	25.00
unhappy	17.50	27.50	22.50	52.50	45.00	48.75
very unhappy	15.00	2.50	8.75	12.50	15.00	13.75
Happiest Marital Period						
present time	42.50	50.00	46.25	20.00	27.50	23.75
young adult years no children	17.50	10.00	13.75	32.50	35.00	33.75
children small	35.00	27.50	31.25	47.50	35.00	41.25
children teens	5.00	12.50	8.75	0.00	2.50	1.25

TABLE 3 (continued)

Perception	Noncounselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)	Counselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)
Marital Happiness over time						
better	50.00	55.00	52.50	27.50	25.00	26.25
worse	20.00	20.00	20.00	47.50	47.50	47.50
same	30.00	25.00	27.50	25.00	27.50	26.25
Most Marriages over time						
better	45.00	55.00	50.00	27.50	17.50	22.50
worse	17.50	12.50	15.00	35.00	30.00	32.50
same	37.50	32.50	35.00	37.50	52.50	45.00
Most Rewarding Aspect of Marriage						
companionship	47.50	32.50	40.00	27.50	27.50	27.50
economic security	7.50	17.50	12.50	7.50	27.50	17.50
status in community	7.50	0.00	3.75	10.00	0.00	5.00

TABLE 3 (continued)

Perception	Noncounselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)	Counselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)
sexual relationship	2.50	0.00	1.25	5.00	0.00	2.50
being needed by spouse	27.50	22.50	25.00	20.00	15.00	17.50
having emotional needs met	5.00	5.00	5.00	12.50	2.50	8.75
expression of true feelings	2.50	17.50	10.00	2.50	10.00	6.25
none are rewarding	0.00	5.00	2.50	15.00	15.00	15.00
Most Troublesome Aspect of Marriage						
frequent disagreement	10.00	17.50	13.75	17.50	22.50	20.00
lack of mutual interests	10.00	10.00	10.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
sexual relationship	5.00	2.50	3.75	15.00	0.00	7.50
too little time together	7.50	5.00	6.25	7.50	2.50	5.00
too much time together	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	2.50	3.75

TABLE 3 (continued)

Perception	Noncounselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)	Counselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)
different values and philosophies	22.50	7.50	15.00	12.50	15.00	13.75
inability to express true feelings	15.00	22.50	18.75	32.50	50.00	41.30
no trouble at all	30.00	35.00	32.50	5.00	2.50	3.75
Characteristic of Successful Marriage						
mutual respect	60.00	52.50	56.25	12.50	42.50	27.50
determination	2.50	5.00	3.75	0.00	0.00	0.00
personality growth	2.50	2.50	2.50	22.50	15.00	18.75
emotional closeness	7.50	5.00	6.25	5.00	5.00	5.00
sexual satisfaction	5.00	2.50	3.75	10.00	0.00	5.00
expression of true feelings	2.50	10.00	6.25	37.50	20.00	28.75
having children	5.00	5.00	5.00	7.50	12.50	10.00
being in love	15.00	17.50	16.25	5.00	5.00	5.00

TABLE 3 (continued)

Perception	Noncounselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)	Counselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)
Greatest Worry Now						
money	10.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
health	15.00	17.50	16.25	10.00	2.50	6.25
children's welfare	25.00	30.00	27.50	5.00	10.00	7.50
social and political problems	22.50	22.50	22.50	0.00	2.50	1.25
business	10.00	0.00	5.00	17.50	0.00	8.75
marital relationship	2.50	12.50	7.50	47.50	65.00	56.25
loss of appearance and vitality	0.00	7.50	3.75	2.50	0.00	1.25
aging parents	10.00	10.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
loneliness,depression and/or boredom	5.00	0.00	2.50	12.50	15.00	13.75
Happiest Period of Life						
childhood	7.50	7.50	7.50	10.00	27.50	18.75

TABLE 3 (continued)

Perception	Noncounselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)	Counselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)
teen years	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.00	2.50
single adult	15.00	10.00	12.50	40.00	15.00	27.50
early years marriage without children	10.00	10.00	10.00	20.00	15.00	17.50
children small	22.50	22.50	22.50	15.00	20.00	17.50
children teens	7.50	10.00	8.75	0.00	2.50	1.25
present time	37.50	40.00	38.75	15.00	15.00	15.00
Greatest Advantage of Present Period of Life						
more freedom	27.50	22.50	25.00	15.00	15.00	15.00
larger income	30.00	12.50	21.25	25.00	30.00	27.50
more time for spouse	7.50	5.00	6.25	15.00	2.50	8.75
time for hobbies	12.50	15.00	13.75	10.00	10.00	10.00
ability to return to work (wife)	0.00	20.00	10.00	2.50	15.00	8.75

TABLE 3 (continued)

Perception	Noncounselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)	Counselled Sample Males (n=40)	Females (n=40)	Total (n=80)
time for social activities	2.50	7.50	5.00	0.00	2.50	1.25
other	7.50	12.50	10.00	25.00	17.50	21.25
nothing at all	12.50	5.00	8.75	7.50	7.50	7.50

Results of Statistical Analysis

During computer analysis of the data, tests for the homogeneity of variance were simultanously conducted by the programs developed by DERS to determine whether or not the variances of the scores obtained on the MYLSS by the different groups were significantly different from one another. On the basis of this test for the homogeneity of variance, the various combinations of groups examined in this study of middle-aged couples were found to have a common dispersion of scores, an assumption on which the t-test and analysis of variance rest. Furthermore, a test for additivity was conducted for all two-way analyses of variance and because no interaction effects were discovered the least squares solution was performed on the data.

Because all the hypotheses in the present investigation were primarily concerned with life satisfaction and marriage, both the Marital Relations subscore and the total life satisfaction score of the MYLSS as well as the first three perceptions of the MYMPS were utilized in the analysis. The total life satisfaction score was to represent the level of life satisfaction for the middle agers, while the Marital Relations score and the responses to questions 17, 18 and 19 of the MYMPS were to represent the middle ager's marital satisfaction and marital perceptions. Four major hypotheses and nine subsidiary

hypotheses were presented for analyses.

Major Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The sample of middle-aged couples who are receiving counselling will report less satisfaction with marriage and life than the sample of middle-aged couples who are not receiving counselling.

Results: A t-test was conducted to test this hypothesis and a highly significant statistical difference was found in the anticipated direction for both the Marital Relations (MR) subscore, and the life satisfaction score (LS) as indicated in Table 4.

TABLE 4

T-TEST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS OF NC AND C SAMPLES

	Means		SD		df	t	p
	NC	C	NC	C			
MR	18.34	14.64	5.05	4.53	158	4.88	.000001*
LS	150.23	140.19	16.39	14.74	158	4.07	.00007*

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Chi square was utilized to examine the responses of NC and C samples to selected marital perceptions of the MYMPS. A highly significant difference was also discovered between the NC and C samples in the type of response

given to questions regarding their present marital happiness; the happiest period of their marital life; and their marital happiness over the years. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5

CHI SQUARE FOR NC AND C RESPONSES TO SELECTED PERCEPTIONS

	Marital Happiness Now				Happiest Marital Period				Marital Happiness Over Time		
group	very happy	happy	unhappy	very unhappy	present time	adult no kids	kids small	kids teens	better	worse	same
NC	34	21	18	7	37	11	25	7	43	18	19
C	10	20	39	11	19	27	33	1	20	36	24
Chi square	21.74				18.13				18.69		
df	3				3				2		
p	.00007*				.0004*				.00009*		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

With respect to question 17, the majority of the NC respondents perceived marriages as very happy, while the majority of the C respondents reported that the marriages were unhappy. Responses to question 18 revealed that the greatest proportion of the NC subjects viewed the present

time as the happiest period of married life, while the C subjects reported that the time in their lives when the children were small was the happiest. Interestingly, neither a large number of C or NC individuals considered the time when the children were teenagers to be a particularly happy one. The majority of the NC sample reported on question 19 that the marriage had improved over the years,while the majority of the C subjects perceived the marriage as worse.

Hypothesis 2: Postparental couples will exhibit greater satisfaction with marriage and life than parental couples.

Results: A t-test of means was performed to compare the Marital Relations scores and life satisfaction scores of postparental and parental groups. The results of this test are presented in Table 6 which indicates that there were no significant differences on the Marital Relations subscore and the life satisfaction score.

TABLE 6

T-TEST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS OF POSTPARENTAL AND PARENTAL GROUPS

	Means		SD		df	t	p
	PP	P	PP	P			
MR	16.63	16.35	5.05	5.23	158	.34	.74
LS	142.76	147.65	15.71	16.68	158	-1.9	.06

A two-way analysis of variance was also conducted to test this hypothesis by controlling for the post-parental and parental groups membership in the NC and C samples. Tables 7 and 9 show the results of this analysis and Tables 8 and 10 show the direction of the observed differences.

TABLE 7

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS FOR NC AND C SAMPLES OF PP AND P GROUPS

Source	SS	df	F	p
SA (P,PP)	3.03	1	.13	.72
SB (NC,C)	547.60	1	23.68	.000005*
SE (Error)	3631.35	157		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

TABLE 8

COMPARISON OF MARITAL RELATIONS MEANS FOR NC AND C SAMPLES OF PP AND P GROUPS

Group	NC	Number	C	Number
Parental	18.28	40	14.42	40
Postparental	18.40	40	14.85	40

TABLE 9

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION FOR NC AND C SAMPLES OF PP AND P GROUPS

Source	SS	df	F	p
SA (P,PP)	955.54	1	4.10	.06
SB (NC,C)	4030.13	1	16.90	.00007*
SE (Error)	37437.00	157		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

TABLE 10

COMPARISON OF LIFE SATISFACTION MEANS FOR NC AND C SAMPLES OF PP AND P GROUPS

Group	Sample	
	NC	C
Parental	151.75	143.55
Postparental	148.70	136.82

The results of the two-way analysis agreed with those of the one-way. No significant differences were found between the postparental and parental groups regardless of their membership in the NC and C sample for their scores on Marital Relations and life satisfaction.

Table 11 shows the Chi square results for three questions on the MYMPS when NC and C samples were combined and Table 12 shows the Chi square when the samples had been divided.

TABLE 11

CHI SQUARE FOR COMBINED NC AND C SAMPLES OF PP AND P GROUPS AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS

	Marital Happiness Now				Happiest Marital Period				Marital Happiness Over Time		
group	very happy	happy	unhappy	very unhappy	present time	adult no kids	kids small	kids teens	better	worse	same
P	19	19	33	9	30	16	30	4	32	32	16
PP	25	22	24	9	26	22	28	4	31	22	27
Chi square			2.46			1.30				2.04	
df			3			3				2	
p			.48			.73				.39	

TABLE 12

CHI SQUARE FOR NC AND C SAMPLES OF PP AND P GROUPS AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS

		Question (Q)											
		Marital Happiness Now				Happiest Marital Period				Marital Happiness Over Time			
A Sample	B Group	very happy	happy	un-happy	very unhappy	present	adult no kids	kids small	kids teens	better	worse	same	
NC	P	15	10	12	3	20	5	12	3	23	9	8	
	PP	19	11	6	4	17	6	13	4	20	9	11	
C	P	4	9	21	6	10	11	18	1	9	23	8	
	PP	6	11	18	5	9	16	15	0	11	13	16	

Source	Chi Square	df	p	Chi Square	df	p	Chi Square	df	p
Total	24.70	10	.006*	20.70	10	.02*	38.44	7	.0001*
AB	0.0	1	1.00	0.0	1	1.00	0.0	1	1.00
AQ	21.74	3	.0001*	18.13	3	.0001*	18.69	2	.0001*
BQ	2.46	3	.48	1.30	3	.73	2.15	2	.60
ABQ	0.50	3	.92	1.27	3	.74	1.97	2	.86

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Significant differences were found only in Table 12. All three questions indicated that the counselled versus noncounselled samples of postparental and parental groups viewed their marriages differently but that the post-parental couples did not differ significantly from the parental couples in their types of responses to these questions on marriage. On the basis of these results there does not appear to be a significant difference between the way in which the postparental and parental couples view their marriages and lives.

Hypothesis 3: Early postparental couples will demonstrate less satisfaction with marriage and life than either the late postparental couples or the parental couples.

Results: This hypothesis was tested in essentially three ways. First, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the difference between mean subscores on Marital Relations and mean scores on life satisfaction of the MYLSS for the combined NC and C samples. An overall significant difference was discovered among the groups for their scores on Marital Relations as presented in Table 13.

TABLE 13

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND LAUNCHING GROUPS

Source	SS	df	F	p
EP, LP, P	411.30	2	8.56	.0003*
Error	377.07	157		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Table 14 shows the direction of this difference following a Scheffé test and Figure 4 graphically represents these differences.

TABLE 14

SCHEFFÉ MULTIPLE COMPARISON OF MARITAL RELATIONS MEANS FOR LAUNCHING GROUPS

Time of launch	Mean Differences	df	p
EP versus LP	14.48 - 19.00	2	.0003*
EP versus P	14.48 - 16.35	2	.14
LP versus P	19.00 - 16.35	2	.03*

* differences significant at .05 level or less

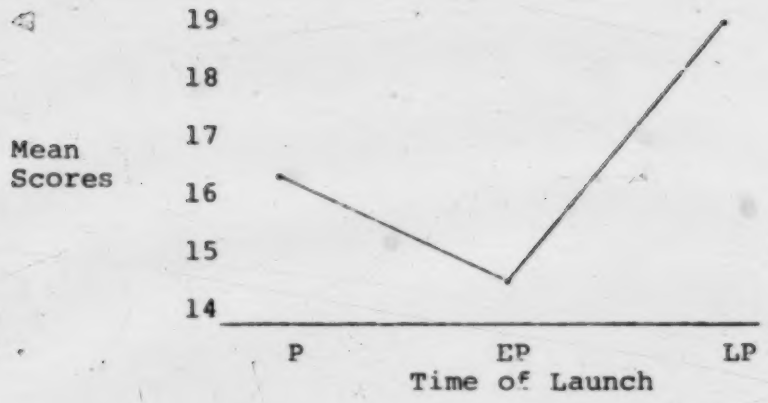

Figure 4. Graphical representation of mean scores on Marital Relations for launching groups.

The data reveal that a significant difference exists between the early postparental group and the late post-parental group,and the late postparental group with the parental group. A significant difference was not detected between the early postparental group and the parental group, although the mean scores were in the anticipated direction.

Differences between these three groups for the combined NC and C' samples were not significant in the total life satisfaction score of the MYLSS but the differences that did exist were in the anticipated direction and approaching significance as indicated in Table 15 and Figure 5.

TABLE 15

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND LAUNCHING GROUPS

Source	SS	df	F	p
EP, LP, P	1398.00	2	2.68	.07
Error	41025.00	157		

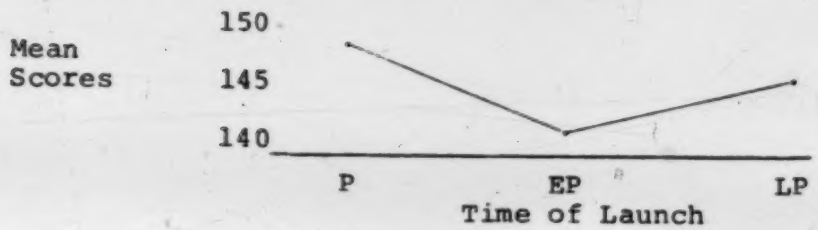

Figure 5. Graphical representation of mean scores for life satisfaction and launching groups.

Significant differences in the types of responses given to the three perceptions on the MYMPS were found following a Chi square. These results are presented in Table 16.

TABLE 16

CHI SQUARE FOR EP, LP AND P's RESPONSES TO SELECTED PERCEPTIONS

	Marital Happiness Now				Happiest Marital Period				Marital Happiness Over Time		
group	very happy	happy	unhappy	very unhappy	present time	adult no kids	kids small	kids teens	better	worse	same
EP	7	7	19	9	6	16	18	2	10	18	14
LP	18	15	5	0	20	6	10	2	21	4	13
P	19	19	33	9	30	16	30	4	32	32	16
Chi square			27.25				15.38			16.91	
df			6				6			4	
p			.0001*				.02*			.002*	

* difference significant at .05 level or less

The majority of the early postparental group saw marriages as unhappy, while the majority of the late postparental and parental groups saw them as happy or very happy. The present time was generally reported to be the happiest marital period for the parental and the late postparental groups, while the time when the children were small was viewed by the early postparental couples to be the happiest time. In addition, there was

a significant difference in the type of response for the group's perceptions of marital happiness over time. The early postparental couples tended to perceive their marital happiness as worse than previous years, while the late postparental and parental couples saw it as improving over the years.

The second method of examining this major hypothesis was by observing the differences among the early postparental, late postparental and parental groups in conjunction with their membership in the NC or C samples. Hence, a two-way analysis of variance was conducted to determine whether the early postparental group would exhibit less satisfaction with life and marriage than the late postparental and parental groups by controlling for the NC and C sample membership. Tables 17 and 18 present the results of the analysis of variance and Figures 6 and 7 give graphical representations for mean scores.

TABLE 17

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS FOR NC AND C SAMPLES AND LAUNCHING GROUPS

Source	SS	df	F	p
SA (NC, C)	582.32	1	28.49	.000001*
SB (EP, LP,P)	446.02	2	10.91	.00004*
SE (Error)	3188.36	156		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

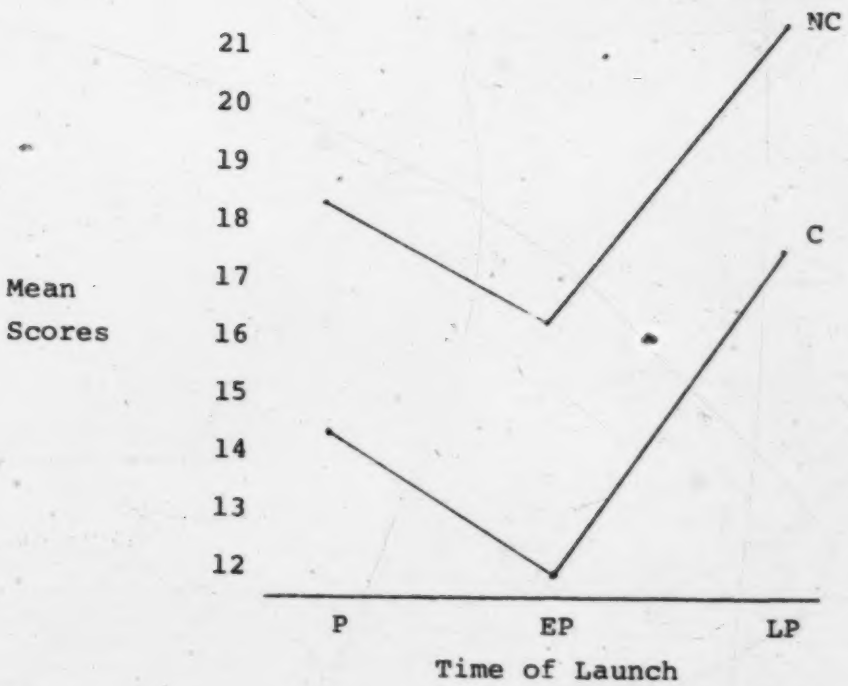

Figure 6. Graphical representation of mean scores on Marital Relations for NC and C samples and launching groups.

TABLE 18

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION FOR NC AND C SAMPLES AND LAUNCHING GROUPS

Source	SS	df	F	P
SA (NC, C)	4130.43	1	17.47	.00005*
SB (EP, LP, P)	1498.97	2	3.17	.04*
SE (Error)	36894.00	156		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

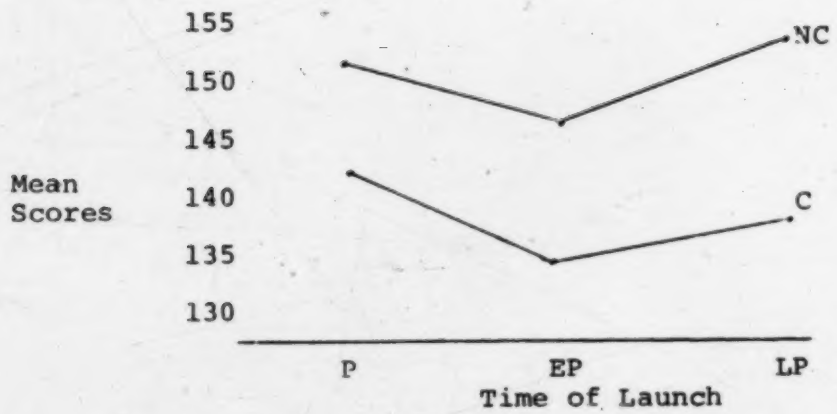

Figure 7: Graphical representation of mean scores on life satisfaction for NC and C samples and launcing groups.

The results of the analysis of variance reveal that there was a significant difference among the three groups of early postparental, late post parental and parental couples for both NC and C samples. This difference was in the anticipated direction.

The results of a three-way Chi square represents the third method of examining this hypothesis and is presented in Table 19.

The data show that there was a significant difference between the NC and C samples' responses to all three questions. In addition, a significant difference was found in the manner of response to all questions for the early postparental, late postparental and parental groups. The early postparental group tended to view the marriage less favourably than either the late postparental or parental couples.

TABLE 19

CHI SQUARE FOR NC AND C SAMPLES OF LAUNCHING GROUPS AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS

A Sample	B Group	Question (Q): Marital Happiness Now				Happiest Marital Period				Marital Happiness Over Time		
		very happy	happy	un-happy	very unhappy	present	adult no kids	kids small	kids teens	better	worse	same
NC	EP	6	5	7	4	6	6	8	2	7	9	6
	LP	13	6	0	0	11	0	5	2	13	0	5
	P	15	10	11	3	20	5	12	3	23	9	8
C	EP	0	2	13	5	0	10	10	0	3	9	8
	LP	6	9	5	0	9	6	5	0	8	4	8
	P	4	9	21	6	10	11	18	1	9	3	8

Source	Chi Square	df	p	Chi Square	df	p	Chi Square	df	p
Total	51.42	17	.0001*	25.70	17	.005*	42.80	12	.0001*
AB	.20	2	.91	.20	2	.91	.20	2	.91
AQ	21.74	3	.0001*	18.13	3	.0001*	20.69	2	.0001*
BQ	27.25	6	.0001*	15.38	6	.02*	21.91	4	.0002*
ABQ	2.23	6	.90	1.99	6	.92	2.14	4	.88

*differences significant at .05 level or less

Hypothesis 4: Middle-aged couples who are satisfied with their lives will generally perceive their present state of their marriage favourably, while middle-aged couples who are dissatisfied with their lives will perceive their present marital situation unfavourably.

Results: An ANOVA was utilized to test this hypothesis by comparing the middle-aged couples' responses to questions 17, 18 and 19 of the MYMPS with life satisfaction scores of the MYLSS. The results of the analysis for question 17 are presented in Table 20, and the direction of the observed difference is presented in Table 21.

TABLE 20

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND MYMPS #17

Source	SS	df	F	p
Responses to #17	8807.00	3	13.62	.000002*
Error	33616.00	156		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

TABLE 21

COMPARISON OF LIFE SATISFACTION MEANS FOR MYMPS #17

Response	Number	Mean
Very happy	44	156.86
Happy	41	143.63
Unhappy	57	139.67
Very unhappy	18	137.83

The highly significant results show that those middle-aged couples who rated their marriages as happy received the highest mean score on life satisfaction, while those who rated their marriages as very unhappy received the lowest mean score on life satisfaction.

Tables 22 and 23 show the results of the analysis of variance for question 18 and its direction, while Tables 24 and 25 show the results and directions for question 19.

TABLE 22

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND MYMPS #18

Source	SS	df	F	p
Responses to #18	7719.00	3	11.57	.000003*
Error	34704.00	156		

TABLE 23

COMPARISON OF LIFE SATISFACTION MEANS FOR MYMPS #18

Response	Number	Mean
Present time	56	153.98
young adult years no children	38	138.32
children small	58	140.43
children teenagers	8	151.13

TABLE 24

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND MYMPS #19

Source	SS	df	F	p
Responses to #19	7936.00	2	18.06	.0000001*
Error	34487.00	157		

*differences significant at .05 level or less

TABLE 25

COMPARISON OF LIFE SATISFACTION MEANS FOR MYMPS #19

Response	Number	Mean
Better	63	153.16
Worse	54	140.93
About the same	43	137.53

Highly significant differences were found among the types of responses and the life satisfaction scores for both these questions. With respect to question 18, those middle-aged couples who perceived the present time as the happiest period in their married lives received the highest life satisfaction score. Couples who saw their marriages as improving over the years on question 19 also received the highest score on life satisfaction. Interestingly, couples who received the lowest mean score

on life satisfaction were those who perceived their marriages as being about the same over the years.

Subsidiary Hypotheses

Hypothesis 5: Middle-aged men will report less satisfaction with marriage and life than middle-aged women.

Results: A t-test of means is presented in Table 26, indicating that there was no significant difference in the way husbands and wives scored on Marital Relations and life satisfaction. A two-way analysis of variance was also conducted to test this hypothesis by controlling for NC and C membership. Similar results were obtained as indicated in Tables 27 and 28.

TABLE 26

T-TEST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS FOR SEX

	Means		SD		df	t	p
	Husb.	Wives	Husb.	Wives			
MR	16.81	16.16	5.13	5.14	158	.80	.42
LS	146.23	144.19	15.33	17.32	158	.79	.43

TABLE 27

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS FOR NC AND C SAMPLES AND SEX

Source	SS	df	F	p
SA (Sex)	16.90	1	.73	.39
SB (NC, C)	547.60	1	23.77	.000005*
SE (Error)	3617.48	157		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

TABLE 28

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION FOR NC AND C SAMPLES AND SEX

Source	SS	df	F	p
SA (Sex)	166.07	1	.68	.41
SB (NC, C)	4030.13	1	16.55	.00008*
SE (Error)	38226.00	157		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Table 29, in addition, shows that there were no significant differences in the way husbands and wives responded to selected perceptions of their marriages.

TABLE 29

CHI SQUARE FOR COMBINED NC AND C SAMPLES OF HUSBANDS WIVES

	Marital Happiness Now				Happiest Marital Period				Marital Happiness Over Time		
group	very happy	happy	unhappy	very unhappy	present time	adult no kids	kids small	kids teens	better	worse	same
H	21	20	28	11	25	20	33	2	31	27	22
W	23	21	29	7	31	18	25	6	32	27	21
Chi square			1.02			3.85				.04	
df			3			3				2	
p			.80			.28				.98	

Note: H refers to Husbands
W refers to Wives

Hypothesis 6: Middle-aged couples with more than two children will report less satisfaction with marriage and life than middle-aged couples with one or two children.

Results: The results of an ANOVA as depicted in Tables 30 and 31 demonstrate that an overall significant relationship existed between the number of children for both Marital Relations and life satisfaction scores.

Tables 32 and 33 reveal that the observed significant differences were in the predicted direction.

TABLE 30

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Source	SS	df	F	p
Number of children	1351.00	3	24.82	.000001*
Error	2830.98	156		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

TABLE 31

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Source	SS	df	F	p
Number of children	3465.00	3	4.62	.004*
Error	38958.00	156		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

TABLE 32

MEANS FOR MARITAL RELATIONS AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Variable	Number	Mean
One child	22	20.55
Two children	36	20.19
3, 4 or 5 children	74	14.47
6 or more children	28	13.86

TABLE 33

MEANS FOR LIFE SATISFACTION AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Variable	Number	Mean
One child	22	147.95
Two children	36	152.61
3, 4 or 5 children	74	144.68
6 or more children	28	140.99

Furthermore, the highly significant results of Chi square presented in Table 34 lends additional support for this hypothesis in that couples with one or two children generally viewed their marital situation more favourably than did couples with three or more children.

TABLE 34

CHI SQUARE FOR NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS

	Marital Happiness Now				Happiest Marital Period				Marital Happiness Over Time		
children	very happy	happy	unhappy	very unhappy	present time	adult no kids	kids small	kids teens	better	worse	same
1	15	6	1	0	14	0	6	2	20	0	2
2	21	13	0	2	27	3	4	2	26	3	7
3-5	6	17	40	11	11	26	34	3	12	31	31
6+	2	5	16	5	4	9	14	1	5	20	3
Chi square	77.40				58.46				61.68		
df	9				9				6		
p	.000001*				.000001*				.000001*		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Hypothesis 7: The shorter the length of the middle-aged marriage, the less satisfaction will be reported by middle-aged couples.

Results: The results of an ANOVA for Marital Relations in Table 35 did not show a significant difference between the length of the marital period and the Marital Relations

scores, although the differences observed were in the anticipated direction and approaching significance. Table 36 shows the mean scores on Marital Relations for each marital period.

TABLE 35

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND DURATION OF THE MARRIAGE

Source	SS	df	F	p
Marital duration	193.95	3	2.53	.06
Error	3988.02	156		

TABLE 36

MEANS FOR MARITAL RELATIONS AND DURATION OF MARRIAGE

Marital Duration	Number	Mean
15 - 19 years	16	14.19
20 - 24 years	20	15.79
25 - 29 years	63	17.10
30 or more years	61	17.56

The ANOVA for life satisfaction mean scores, on the other hand, were significantly different and in the predicted direction. Table 37 presents the results of the ANOVA and Table 38 gives the direction of the difference

following a Scheffé test.

TABLE 37

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND DURATION OF MARRIAGE

Source	SS	df	F	p
Marital Duration	7939.00	3	11.97	.000002*
Error	34484.00	156		

*differences significant at .05 level or less

TABLE 38

SCHEFFÉ MULTIPLE COMPARISON OF LIFE SATISFACTION MEANS AND DURATION OF MARRIAGE

Marital Duration	Mean Differences	df	p
15 - 19 years with 20 - 24 years	129.25 - 142.05	3	.027*
15 - 19 years with 25 - 29 years	129.25 - 148.81	3	.0001*
15 - 19 years with 30+ years	129.25 - 156.25	3	.00001*
20 - 24 years with 30+ years	142.05 - 156.25	3	.004*

* differences significant at .05 level or less

The results of Chi square are presented in Table 39. Only responses to questions 17 and 19 reached the level of significance, although the responses to question 18 tended to follow the anticipated direction.

TABLE 39

CHI SQUARE FOR DURATION OF THE MARRIAGE AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS

	Marital Happiness Now				Happiest Marital Period				Marital Happiness Over Time		
marital duration	very happy	happy	unhappy	very unhappy	present time	adult no kids	kids small	kids teens	better	worse	same
15-19	1	3	12	0	3	2	10	1	5	6	5
20-24	4	4	11	1	9	6	5	0	10	7	3
25-29	22	16	20	5	27	14	19	3	25	23	15
30+	17	18	14	12	17	16	24	4	23	18	20
Chi square	18.37				11.08				13.13		
df	9				9				6		
p	.03*				.27				.04*		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Hypothesis 8: The younger the middle-aged individual, the less his satisfaction with marriage and life.

Results: Tables 40 and 41 show that no significant differences were found between the age of the individual and his scores on Marital Relations and life satisfaction. Table 42, on the other hand, shows that there were significant differences among the age groups in their responses to question 19 of the MYMPS. The types of responses emitted were in the anticipated direction. Responses to question 17 were approaching significance and in the anticipated direction.

TABLE 40

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND AGE

Source	SS	df	F	p
Age groups	45.05	3	.57	.64
Error	4136.93	156		

TABLE 41

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND AGE

Source	SS	df	F	p
Age groups	404.00	3	.50	.68
Error	42019.00	156		

TABLE 42

CHI SQUARE FOR AGE AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS

	Marital Happiness Now				Happiest Marital Period				* Marital Happiness Over Time		
age group	very happy	happy	unhappy	very unhappy	present time	adult no kids	kids small	kids teens	better	worse	same
40-44	2	4	6	1	7	2	4	0	4	3	6
45-49	13	11	25	5	20	18	14	2	17	24	13
50-54	18	11	13	11	16	12	21	4	25	20	8
55-60	11	15	13	1	13	6	19	2	17	7	16
Chi square		16.52				10.37				16.03	
df		9				9				6	
p		.06				.32				.01*	

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Hypothesis 9: Middle-aged women who are gainfully employed at the time of this study will report higher levels of satisfaction than middle-aged women who are not employed.

Results: Table 43 indicates that employed women did score significantly higher of Marital Relations and life satisfaction.

TABLE 43

T-TEST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS FOR EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED WOMEN

	Means		SD		df	t	p
	E	UE	E	UE			
MR	17.22	13.84	5.30	3.90	78	2.80	.006*
LS	147.98	135.84	17.32	14.37	78	3.10	.003*

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Note: E refers to Employed
UE refers to Unemployed

The results of Chi square on questions 17 and 19 gave additional support for this hypothesis. This expected difference on question 18 was not confirmed but the differences observed were in the anticipated direction.

TABLE 44

CHI SQUARE FOR EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED WIVES AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS

	Marital Happiness Now				Happiest Marital Period				Marital Happiness Over Time		
group	very happy	happy	unhappy	very unhappy	present time	adult no kids	kids small	kids teens	better	worse	same
E	20	17	13	5	26	10	15	4	27	13	15
UE	3	4	16	2	5	8	10	2	5	14	6
Chi square	12.75				5.66				8.37		
df	3				3				2		
p	.005*				.13				.02*		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Hypothesis 10: The higher the occupational levels of the middle-aged individuals, the greater their reported levels of satisfaction with marriage and life.

Results: A one-way analysis of variance as presented in Table 45 showed that there were no significant differences among the various occupational levels and scores on Marital Relations.

TABLE 45

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL

Source	SS	df	F	p
Occupational levels	290.93	7	1.62	.13
Error	3891.05	152		

Chi square in Table 46, in addition, showed that no significant differences existed between responses to each of the three questions concerning marriage and occupational levels.

TABLE 46

CHI SQUARE AND PROBABILITIES FOR MARITAL PERCEPTIONS AND OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL

Question	Chi square	df	p
#17 Own marital happiness	29.53	21	.10
#18 Happiest marital period	29.01	21	.11
#19 Marital happiness over time	23.47	14	.06

An analysis of variance for life satisfaction scores indicated, however, that a significant difference existed between life satisfaction and occupational levels as presented in Table 47.

TABLE 47

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL

Source	SS	df	F	p
Occupational levels	7851.00	7	4.93	.00006*
Error	34572.00	152		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

The data therefore suggest that occupational level did not have a relationship with Marital Relations scores but that it did have a relationship with life satisfaction scores. In order to determine which occupational levels attributed to the significant difference found on life satisfaction, a Scheffé test was conducted. Table 48 indicates that only those people in occupational level 2 were significantly different from the unemployed individuals in occupational level 8. Albeit that the trend of the mean scores followed the anticipated direction, no other significant differences between pairs of life satisfaction means were found.

TABLE 48

SCHEFFÉ MULTIPLE COMPARISON OF LIFE SATISFACTION MEANS AND OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL

Group	Mean Differences	df	p
Level 2 versus level 1	159.40 - 158.50	7	1.00
Level 2 versus level 3	159.40 - 148.47	7	.73
Level 2 versus level 4	159.40 - 140.96	7	.06
Level 2 versus level 5	159.40 - 148.21	7	.60
Level 2 versus level 6	159.40 - 144.00	7	.36
Level 2 versus level 7	159.40 - 143.67	7	.41
Level 2 versus level 8	159.40 - 136.31	7	.002*

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Hypothesis 11: The higher the educational level reached by individuals, the higher their satisfaction with marriage and life.

Results: Table 49 reveals that no significant differences were found between educational levels and Marital Relations scores.

TABLE 49

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Source	SS	df	F	p
Educational level	218.90	6	1.41	.21
Error	3963.07	153		

The results of Chi square, in addition, supported this observation in that no significant differences were found for selected marital perceptions and the various levels of education as presented in Table 50.

TABLE 50

CHI SQUARE AND PROBABILITIES FOR MARITAL PERCEPTIONS AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Question	Chi square	df	p
#17 Own marital happiness	15.74	18	.61
#18 Happiest marital period	21.04	18	.28
#19 Marital happiness over time	15.63	12	.21

Results of a one-way analysis of variance for life satisfaction and educational levels, however, did show a significant difference as is indicated in Table 51.

TABLE 51

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Source	SS	df	F	p
Educational level	5736.00	6	3.99	.0009*
Error	36687.00	153		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Table 52 presents the results of a Scheffé multiple comparison of means which attempted to determine which educational levels accounted for the difference. The table shows that a significant difference existed between those individuals who attended college or university for two or more years and those who completed more than four years of university training for a profession. This difference was in the anticipated direction. Otherwise no significant differences between pairs of means for educational level and life satisfaction were discovered by the Scheffé.

TABLE 52

SCHEFFÉ MULTIPLE COMPARISONS OF LIFE SATISFACTION MEANS AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Group	Mean Differences	df	p
College attendance versus grade 8	135.56 - 136.00	6	1.00
College attendance versus grade 9	135.56 - 139.97	6	.99
College attendance versus less than high school	135.56 - 144.18	6	.76
College attendance versus high school	135.56 - 147.66	6	.40
College attendance versus degree	135.56 - 154.63	6	.24
College attendance versus university training for profession	135.56 - 152.56	6	.04*

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Hypothesis 12: The higher the total family income, the greater satisfaction with marriage and life will be reported by middle-aged couples.

Results: The results of an ANOVA which was used to test this hypothesis are presented in Tables 53 and 55. The data show that highly significant differences existed between income level and scores on Marital Relations and life satisfaction. Tables 54 and 56 show that the direction of these differences were in the predicted direction.

TABLE 53

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND INCOME

Source	SS	df	F	p
Income levels	527.50	5	4.45	.0008*
Error	3654.47	154		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

TABLE 54

MEANS FOR MARITAL RELATIONS AND INCOME LEVEL

Income level	Number	Mean
Less than $7,999	14	13.07
$8,000 - $13,999	14	14.55
$14,000 - $19,999	40	16.66
$20,000 - $25,999	36	17.00
$26,000 - $30,999	30	18.00
$31,000 or more	26	18.52

TABLE 55

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND INCOME

Source	SS	df	F	p
Income levels	9803.00	5	9.26	.000002*
Error	32620.00	154		

* difference significant at .05 level or less

TABLE 56

MEANS FOR LIFE SATISFACTION AND INCOME LEVEL

Income level	Number	Mean
Less than $7,999	14	124.78
$8,000 - $13,999	14	142.07
$14,000 - $19,999	40	143.23
$20,000 - $25,999	36	146.03
$26,000 - $30,999	30	147.56
$31,000 or more	26	156.73

The results of Chi square are presented in Table 57.

TABLE 57

CHI SQUARE FOR INCOME LEVEL AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS

Group	Marital Happiness Now				Happiest Marital Period				Marital Happiness Over Time		
Income level	very happy	happy	un-happy	very unhappy	present	adult no kids	kids small	kids teens	better	worse	same
less than $7,999	2	4	5	3	0	3	10	1	2	5	7
$8,000-$13,999	2	7	5	0	7	2	4	1	8	4	2
$14,000-$19,999	4	11	18	7	6	14	17	3	7	16	17
$20,000-$25,999	16	7	11	2	20	8	7	1	15	11	10
$26,000-$30,999	10	7	9	4	10	6	12	2	15	10	5
$31,000+	10	5	9	2	13	5	8	0	16	8	2
Chi square			23.08				30.69			41.29	
df			15				15			10	
p			.08				.01*			.00001*	

difference significant at .05 level or less

The middle ager's response to rating his present marital happiness was not significantly related to his level of income, although individuals in the higher incomes tended to respond favourably to their present marital situation. Significant differences were found for income levels and the types of responses given to questions concerning the happiest marital period and marital happiness over the years. These were in the anticipated direction.

Hypothesis 13: Middle-aged couples who are actively engaged in social, voluntary or church activities will report more satisfaction with marriage and life than couples who are not so engaged.

Results: A t-test of means is presented in Table 58, indicating that middle agers who answer yes to the question, "Do you enjoy belonging to and participating in civic and social organizations?", receive significantly higher mean scores on Marital Relations than middle agers who respond in the negative.

TABLE 58

T-TEST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS FOR SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

	Means		SD		df	t	p
	Yes	No	Yes	No			
MR	17.53	15.42	5.14	4.92	158	2.7	.009*
LS	146.37	144.01	17.54	15.02	158	.9	.36

* differences significant at .05 level or less

In addition, these individuals had higher mean scores on life satisfaction,although the differences were not significant.

The results of an analysis of variance in Tables 59 and 60 show similar findings in that a significant difference existed for the extent of the middle ager's involvement in social and civic organizations with his Marital Relations score, but that no significant differences existed for life satisfaction scores. Table 61 shows that the significant difference found on Marital Relations was in the predicted direction.

TABLE 59

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND EXTENT OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Source	SS	df	F	p
Number of organizations	314.54	2	6.38	.002*
Error	3867.43	157		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

TABLE 60

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND EXTENT OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Source	SS	df	F	p
Number of organizations	1272.00	2	2.43	.09
Error	41151.00	157		

TABLE 61

SCHEFFÉ MULTIPLE COMPARISON OF MARITAL RELATIONS MEANS AND EXTENT OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Number of Organizations	Mean Differences	df	p
None versus 1 - 3	15.25 - 17.39	2	.03*
None versus 4+	15.25 - 20.86	2	.02*

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Despite the fact that the data tend to support the notion that those who actively participate in social activities have higher scores on Marital Relations, the Chi square test revealed that there were no significant differences between the middle agers' response to the question of enjoying such activities and the type of response given to selected marital perceptions.

TABLE 62

CHI SQUARE AND PROBABILITIES FOR MARITAL PERCEPTIONS AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Question	Chi Square	df	p
#17 Own Marital Happiness	9.31	6	.16
#18 Happiest Marital Period	7.76	6	.26
#19 Marital Happiness Over Time	8.35	4	.08

With respect to volunteer activities the t-test results in Table 63 show that middle agers who do volunteer work (V) have higher mean scores on both Marital Relations and life satisfaction than middle agers who do not do volunteer work (NV).

TABLE 63

T-TEST DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEANS FOR VOLUNTEER WORK

	Means		S.D.		df	t	p
	V	NV	V	NV			
MR	18.04	15.12	5.16	4.72	158	3.62	.0003*
LS	148.81	142.02	15.49	16.48	158	2.64	.008*

* differences significant at .05 level or less

Chi square, however, revealed that there were no significant differences between the individual's participation in volunteer activities and his type of response on selected perceptions of the MYMPS.

TABLE 64

CHI SQUARE AND PROBABILITIES FOR MARITAL PERCEPTIONS AND VOLUNTEER WORK

Question	Chi Square	df	p
#17 Own Marital Happiness	7.38	3	.06
#18 Happiest Marital Period	7.26	3	.06
#19 Marital Happiness Over Time	3.44	2	.18

The extent of the middle agers involved in church related activities was subjected to an analysis of variance for Marital Relations and life satisfaction. Tables 65 and 67 show the results of this analysis and Tables 66 and 68 show that the significant differences were generally in the anticipated direction.

TABLE 65

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: MARITAL RELATIONS AND CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

Source	SS	df	F	p
Church involvement	227.09	3	2.99	.033*
Error	3954.89	156		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

TABLE 66

MEANS FOR MARITAL RELATIONS AND CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

Church Involvement	Number	Means
Very much	23	18.48
Average Participation	35	17.71
Very Little	46	15.35
Not at all	56	15.83

TABLE 67

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE: LIFE SATISFACTION AND CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

Source	SS	df	F	p
Church Involvement	5629.00	3	7.96	.00006*
Error	36794.00	156		

* differences significant at .05 level or less

TABLE 68

MEANS FOR LIFE SATISFACTION AND CHURCH INVOLVEMENT

Church Involvement	Number	Mean
Very much	23	155.00
Average participation	35	151.14
Very little	46	138.91
Not at all	56	142.64

The results of Chi square lend additional support for this hypothesis since all three questions of the selected perceptions of the MYMPS showed significant differences in the anticipated direction as presented in Table 69.

TABLE 69

CHI SQUARE FOR CHURCH INVOLVEMENT AND SELECTED MARITAL PERCEPTIONS

	Marital Happiness Now				Happiest Marital Period				Marital Happiness Over Time		
Church Involvement	very happy	happy	un-happy	very unhappy	present	adult no kids	kids small	kids teens	better	worse	same
Very much	13	4	4	2	15	4	3	1	13	2	8
Average participation	12	8	14	1	11	5	16	3	17	13	5
Very little	11	13	14	8	15	9	20	2	16	11	19
Not at all	8	16	25	7	15	20	19	2	17	28	11
Chi square	20.33				18.92				15.13		
df	9				9				6		
p	.02*				.03*				.02*		

* difference significant at .05 level or less

SUMMARY OF STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

A summary of the foregoing findings is presented in tabular form in order that statistically significant differences are readily apparent. Table 70 shows this condensed version of the results of the present investigation.

TABLE 70

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS AT THE .05 LEVEL FOR THE HYPOTHESES TESTED

Hypotheses	MR Subscore	MYMPS #17	MYMPS #18	MYMPS #19	MYLSS Total score
1. NC and C	*	*	*	*	*
2. P and PP	-	-	-	-	-
P and PP for NC/C	-	-	-	-	-
3. EP, LP and P	*	*	*	*	-
EP, LP and P for NC/C	*	*	*	*	*
4. Life and marriage	NA	*	*	*	*
5. Sex	-	-	-	-	-
6. Number of children	*	*	*	*	*
7. Marital period	-	*	-	*	*
8. Age	-	-	-	*	-
9. E and UE wives	*	*	-	*	*
10. Occupation	-	-	-	-	*
11. Education	-	-	-	-	*
12. Income	*	-	*	*	*
13. Social participation	*	-	-	-	-
Volunteer work	*	-	-	-	*
Church activities	*	*	*	*	*

* differences significant at .05 level or less
\- no significant differences
NA not applicable

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Introduction to the Discussion

This thesis was designed to acquire a better understanding of life and marriage in the middle years by administering questionnaires related to marriage and life to NC and C samples of middle-aged couples. It was hoped that an examination of this kind would provide information as to why some marriages remain organized and why some become disorganized. In addition, it was hoped that the division of NC and C groups could help determine whether the joys and problems experienced in the middle years were a function of being middle aged. The results of the present investigation revealed that several of the hypotheses which were postulated on the basis of a critical review of the literature were confirmed. This chapter will discuss the results of the study and include some implications for counselling as well as list the limitations of the study. Suggestions for future research are also given.

Discussion of the Results

The hypothesized relationship between NC and C samples was supported in that the counselled group of middle agers received significantly lower mean scores on Marital

Relations and life satisfaction than the NC sample of middle agers. In addition, the types of responses emitted on the MYMPS by the NC sample were significantly different from the types of responses emitted by the C sample. The NC couples, for instance, viewed their marital situation favourably since they reported that the present time was the happiest time of their marriage and that the marriage essentially improved over the years. The C sample on the other hand rated present marital happiness as unhappy and as deteriorating over the years.

Interestingly, despite such differences, both samples of middle-aged couples received relatively high scores on the life areas of Self-Concept, Health and Standard of Living as indicated by the mean score distribution in Table 3. That Self-Concept would be high for both samples tends to parallel the findings of Neugarten (1968) who found that the reassessment of the self in the middle years constituted such self-awareness, mastery and competence that fairly strong and positive self-concepts were inevitable. Of the couples who preferred to choose the "other" category on the question relating to the greatest advantage of the present period of life on the MYMPS, all responses tended to focus on such things as emotional maturity, self-awareness, personal growth and increased confidence as being the major advantages of the middle years. Satisfaction with the life areas of Standard of Living and Health

also suggested that the middle agers in this study generally considered themselves to be in the "prime of life". At the same time, the fact that the life area of Aging was the lowest for the NC sample and relatively low for the C sample suggeststhat the prospect of growing old or unattractive is of concern to middle agers, particularly women.

Intriguing as well was the finding that middle-aged husbands and wives were not significantly different from one another in the way that they responded to the MYLSS and the MYMPS regardless of whether they were receiving counselling or not. Although the hypothesized relationship was not stated in this direction it would seem logical that couples who have been married and living together for such a long time would in fact see their marital and life situations similarily.

With respect to the present study's concern for information regarding the maintenance or disorganization of the middle-aged marriage, mean subscores of the MYLSS showed that the C sample of middle agers exhibited the least satisfaction with Marital Relations. That the C sample was found to be significantly less satisfied with marriage and life than the NC sample suggests that the C sample's responses could provide insights into the problems encountered in the middle years. By examining the percentage distribution of this sample's responses to selected marital perceptions of the MYMPS it was discovered

that the greatest difficulty with the counselled middle-ager's marriage was an inability to express true feelings. Hence, it would appear that dissatisfaction with the marital relationship was related to poor or inadequate communication skills. This type of problem, however, is not peculiar to middle-aged couples (Bach & Deutsch, 1970). More noteworthy is the notion that the prospect of communication between the middle-aged husband and wife may only have been a recent occurence. For postparental couples at least, children are no longer in the home and the couple is once again, as in the early period of marriage, faced with each other. For parental couples too, growing teenagers tend to spend less time at home and the parents, once again, begin to feel the necessity of being able to communicate.

The finding that the number of children a couple had, the less the satisfaction also tends to support this interpretation. That children involve parental time and care is evident but that several children need parental attention over the years would inevitably take away the time that the couple could spend with each other. Hence, couples with more than two children may have found it more difficult to adjust to one another in terms of communication once these children approached the launching stage than couples who had fewer children. Blood and Wolfe (1960) also discovered that three or more children tended to interfere with the husband and wife relationship as

reported by the women in their study.

The finding that companionship was the most frequently chosen response for the most rewarding aspect of the middle-ager's marriage and that the inability to express true feelings was found to be an integral part of problems in marriage parallels the findings of Stinnett, Carter and Montgomery (1972), Blood and Wolfe (1960) and Lipman (1961) who reported that these qualities are the most important things couples can give one another in the later years of marriage. Perhaps this is because the husband and wife in the later years of marriage depend more on each other and less on the children. The finding that mutual respect was considered to be the most important characteristic of a successful marriage by the largest portion of the middle agers in this study suggests that respect is an integral part of the husband and wife relationship in the later years. Fried and Stern (1948) found that women who returned to work following the rearing of the children reported that their husband's respect for them increased thereby improving their relationship. The present finding that employed women received significantly higher mean scores on Marital Relations and life satisfaction and that employed women perceived their marriages as happy and improving over the years as opposed to the unemployed who saw marriage as unhappy and deteriorating over the years would also appear to indicate that self-respect or self-worth and mutual respect could have attributed to the

positive evaluation of life and marriage.

Hence, the qualities of companionship, mutual respect and the expression of true feelings appear to be important for the success of the middle-aged marriage. The inability to express true feelings appears to adversely affect the marital satisfaction of middle-aged couples. The foregoing discussion has therefore given some indication that the marital and life satisfactions of the subjects in this study were influenced to some degree by the possible departure of the children from the home. By investigating the middle-aged couples' evaluations of life and marriage in terms of the time when their children were launched a more meaningful explanation of the above interpretation, which was essentially based on speculation of frequency tabulations, will result.

An analysis of the second major hypothesis which examined a group of postparental couples and a group of parental couples, showed that they were not significantly different from each other on Marital Relations, selected marital perceptions and life satisfaction. In other words, the findings of the present investigation showed that post-parental couples were as satisfied with their lives and marriages as parental couples which supports the studies of Axelson (1960), Deutscher (1959) and Glenn (1975). This particular hypothesis and the results of past investigations, however, were not controlled for the influence of possible

short term effects. On the basis of the review of the literature surrounding middle-aged couples as presented in Chapter II, the time of the departure of the last child was considered to be an important area to investigate. Hence, it was deemed essential that an investigation be conducted which could take this time variable into account.

By dividing the postparental group of 40 C and 40 NC couples into early and late postparental categories, the present study explored an area that previous investigations had failed to do. On the basis of Hypothesis 3, the special feature of this investigation, it was expected that early postparental couples (those who launched their last child less than one year ago from the time of this investigation) would demonstrate less satisfaction with marriage and life than either the late postparental (those who had launched their last child between one and nine years ago) or the parental group (those who still had children living in the home).This hypothesis was confirmed suggesting that couples who had recently launched their last child from the home were in fact faced with a crucial event in their lives. Because both the NC and C samples of middle agers followed this pattern, it would appear that child launching may be a problem event that all middle-aged couples must face. Moreover, due to the fact that the early postparental group was significantly less satisfied with marriage than the late postparental group, it follows that

couples who are able to adjust to this crisis of child launching "grow" from their experience and tend to be happier than even before. Couples who do not adjust on the other hand may dissolve the marriage, thereby leaving the late postparental couples as a fairly satisfied group. That the ability to adjust to this apparent crisis appears to either strengthen or weaken the marriage is congruent with reports made by Axelson (1960) and Renee (1970).

Additionally, the finding that the hypothesized relationship between the length of the marriage and satisfaction was approaching significance for scores on Marital Relations and did reach significance for some selected marital perceptions and for life satisfaction suggests further that the postparental group, because of the possibility of its couples being married the longest, are happier than couples in earlier marital periods. This supports reports made by Peterson (1973) and Greenleigh (1974) who stated that as the length of the marriage increases the likelihood of divorce decreases. Child launching therefore, particularly the time of child launching, appears to have a pronounced effect on the attitudes that middle-aged couples have on marriage and life.

However, this increase in marital happiness in the late postparental stage may, in part, only be a function of lowered expectations (Feldman, 1964). Therefore,

although late postparental satisfaction appears high and marriages are seen as improving in happiness in contrast to the dissatisfaction and deterioration reported by early postparental couples, the relationship itself may be quite different from what it was in previous years. The present study, however, did not attempt to judge the quality of the middle-aged marriage as did Cuber and Haroff (1963) but rather, it only investigated the middle-aged couples' evaluations of it. Furthermore, the apparent adjustment to this departure of the children from the home may be intricately interwoven with what the couples' relations with their children were like before the children left. Although the present study did not address itself to this area, it would appear that the departure of the children from the home for the couples in this study was essentially difficult because they all had such high mean scores on the life area of Relations with Children. Brayshaw's (1962) statement that the more devoted one is as a parent the more difficult it is to adjust to the change when the children leave reiterates this explanation. That Relations with Children was the highest mean score for all couples suggests further that children were the major source of satisfaction in even the unhappy marriage which parallels the findings of Luckey and Bain (1970).

The fourth major hypothesis was concerned with the relationship between life satisfaction and marital

perceptions. One would anticipate that couples who are satisfied with their lives are satisfied with their marriages. Stinnett and Hayes (1971) found this to be so since their sample of middle-aged couples rated the life area of Marital Relations on the MYLSS as the most satisfying life area. Examinations of the mean scores obtained by the subjects in this investigation, however, revealed that Marital Relations ranked fourth or fifth for the NC sample and last for the C sample and therefore was not an area of life which gave the greatest deal of satisfaction. Furthermore, because Stinnett and Hayes' (1971) design included only one group of middle class middle-aged couples, the investigators were unable to determine if low satisfaction scores were related to low marital scores. Consequently, it could be inferred that satisfaction with life is related to satisfaction with marriage and dissatisfaction with life is related to dissatisfaction with marriage. Middle-aged couples who rated their present marital relationship as unhappy and very unhappy, for instance, received lower mean scores on life satisfaction than did couples who rated their marriages in the reverse. When comparing the mean scores on life satisfaction with ratings of the happiest marital period, couples who rated the present time as the happiest received the highest mean scores. These findings again emphasize the importance of the marital relationship in the later years.

The fact that the subjects' responses tended to be consistent when examining the MYLSS and the MYMPS responses suggests that the respondents were honest in their manner of answering these two questionnaires. Because the life satisfaction scores of the MYLSS seem to be positively related to the MYMPS it is plausible to assume that both questionnaires support one another.

The finding that the age of the respondents was not significantly related to life satisfaction or marital perceptions is consistent with the findings of Stinnett and Hayes (1971). It would appear that the age range of 40 to 60 for the respondents in this study was not really broad enough to determine if differences existed. The investigations by Spreitzer et al. (1976), Rollins and Feldman (1970), Rollins and Cannon (1974) and Renee (1970), for instance, essentially endorsed examinations of several age groups making the distinctions between the young and the old fairly straightforward. Divisions of only five years are likely not broad enough since all couples herein examined were middle aged by definition. Renee's (1970) assertion that individuals over the age of 45 are less likely to report dissatisfaction was based on comparisons with other age groups but since all couples were 40 years of age or over, this may also be a function of Renee's (1970) finding.

The hypothesized relationships between the total life

satisfaction score of the MYLSS and higher income levels, educational levels and occupational levels were confirmed, although occupational levels and educational levels were not found to be significantly related to Marital Relations and selected marital perceptions. That the level of the family income was significantly related to both marital and life satisfactions suggests that earnings do influence the middle agers' attitudes to life and marriage. The present finding was also consistent with those of Renee (1970), Deutscher (1959) and Neugarten (1968) indicating that the earning capacity of the family influences the resulting standard of living and perhaps recreational entertainment, which in turn influences the couples' attitudes. That the majority of the respondents of higher income levels considered the present time to be the happiest marital period would suggest that they are likely at the height of their earning power. In addition, because the present time and the time when children were small were the most frequently chosen responses suggests that these periods of life are less of a strain on the family budget than when the children are teenagers or when the couple is just starting out.

The significant difference found between the life satisfaction means of those who attended college or university for two or more years and those who completed more than four years of university training for a profession

tends to parallel the findings of Luckey (1966) in that her differences were also only between the higher educational levels. One explanation for this is that individuals who have attended college or university for two or more years may feel that they have not accomplished what they wanted in terms of education which in turn would make them less satisfied than individuals who completed professional training and who no longer needed to strive educationally. That the differences of occupational level and life satisfaction were found to exist for only the occupational levels of 2 and 8 suggests that the unemployed do not have as high self-concepts or as high job satisfactions as do those individuals who are fairly high up on the occupational ladder. Hence, their total life satisfaction score becomes lower because they are possibly lower on these life areas.

The findings that Marital Relations and life satisfaction scores of the MYLSS were significantly related to volunteer work and church involvement indicates that participation in these activities is closely related to marital and life satisfaction. The philosophy involved behind church and volunteer participation may, however, have had some influence on this finding in that individuals who are "out to do good" tend to "feel good". Another explanation for the present results on the other hand is that the findings are supportive of the proponents of

Activity theory. In other words, middle agers who become involved in extracurricular activities like church work or volunteer work are given atmospheres in which they can feel that they are needed and involved in worthwhile activities,which in turn maintains their feelings of self-esteem and satisfaction (Cavan, 1969; Deutscher, 1959; Kuhlen, 1968; Rose, 1955; Stinnett & Hayes, 1971). Moreover, that these activities, coupled with the significant differences found on Marital Relations for enjoying and belonging to social organizations, can provide joint opportunities for husbands and wives to become involved together. Opportunities for companionship are therefore provided by these activities, a quality which the couples in this investigation considered to be a very important aspect of their marital relationship. Hence, it is not surprising that the relationship between satisfaction and a quality that is considered to be an important element in the couples' lives would be positive.

In summary, it would be legitimate to conclude that the researcher has accomplished what she set out to do. That is, the present investigation was designed to explore the marital and life satisfactions of middle-aged couples and to examine the possible influence that certain variables might have on the middle-aged couples' attitudes towards life and marriage. The results show that this exploration has been fulfilled. In addition, because the framework

presented revealed that NC and C samples of middle-aged couples were significantly different from one another with respect to life and marital satisfactions but that they were very similar in other respects, certain qualities that were characteristic of being middle aged became apparent. More important, the results of the special feature of this study (i.e. Hypothesis 3) helped explain the contradictory findings of past research. Previous investigators, for instance, viewed the relationship between late marital periods or the postparental period with the parental period of life in generally three ways. Some researchers reported that individuals in the postparental period were less satisfied than those in the parental period (Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Burgess & Wallin, 1953; Lang, 1932; Luckey, 1966; Paris & Luckey, 1966; Pineo, 1961). Others showed that postparental individuals were more satisfied than parental individuals (Bossard & Boll, 1955; Burr, 1970; Horn, 1976, Rollins & Cannon, 1974; Rollins & Feldman, 1970). Still other investigators found that individuals in the postparental period were as satisfied as those in the parental period (Axelson, 1960; Deutscher, 1959; Glenn, 1974; Neugarten & Datar, 1974). Without controlling for the influence that short term effects might have on postparental couples in Hypothesis 2, the results of the present study showed that postparental couples were not significantly different from parental couples. However,

once such a control was made in Hypothesis 3, significant differences were readily apparent because an early postparental group was found to be significantly less satisfied than either a late postparental or parental group. Hence, one could infer the following: that subjects in past investigations were in the early postparental period when the findings showed that they were less satisfied than individuals in the parental period; and that subjects were in the late postparental period when the findings showed that they were as satisfied or more satisfied than individuals in the parental period.

Implications for Counselling

The results of this study should be of special interest to individuals who are concerned with middle-aged people. In particular, the data are likely to be especially useful to those involved with the counselling of middle-aged husbands and wives because the insights provided by the study may assist in the understanding of middle agers.

Perhaps the major conclusion to be drawn from this investigation is that the launching of the last child from the parent's home constitutes a "situational crisis" for the middle-aged couple. More specifically, the time of this launching process appears to be crucial to both the couple's marital satisfaction or perceptions of marriage and life satisfaction. That the early postparental period requires some adjustment on the part of middle-aged couples should

be of special concern to the counsellor since he may have to assist them in this adjustment by guiding them to enjoy, appreciate and to depend more on the husband and wife relationship than on the previous parent/child relationship. Counsellors who are involved in marriage enrichment groups and family life education could also benefit from the present finding by helping middle-aged individuals be prepared for the problems that they are likely to encounter in this stage of their lives. In addition, the counsellor may have to encourage self-development for those individuals who devoted so much of their lives to the rearing of children that their own self-growth was thwarted.

That the inability to express true feelings was a problem area for some of the middle-aged couples in this study suggests further that active listening or other communication skills and possibly couple counselling in general would be useful strategies for the counselling of middle-aged couples.

The finding that the life area of Aging was the lowest area of life satisfaction indicates that counsellors and family life educators should be responsible for assisting middle agers and possibly the rest of the population to abolish this stereotype of growing old. Furthermore, that the unemployed were found to be less satisfied with life and marriage indicates that counsellors need to be prepared

in assisting middle agers to adjust to possible role changes involved should they never be employed and to help them redirect their energy.

Based on the relationships discovered between social participation, church activities and volunteer work, counsellors may feel the necessity for promoting leisure activities or leisure counselling for the middle ager. Such activities in addition might fill the void, to some extent at least, that the children leave, when they depart from the home.

Limitations

The major limitation with this study was an inevitable result of the approach used to collect the data. As with all descriptive approaches, a researcher does not have the sample of the population which he originally defined but only those members of the universe who were willing to respond (Helmstadter, 1970). Such was the case with the present investigation in that the study required the cooperation of both NC and C samples of middle agers. Hence, it is quite possible that the individuals who responded to the two questionnaires of MYLSS and MYMPS were quite different from those individuals who could not be contacted and from those individuals who refused to participate. These individuals, of course, could have provided an alternate perspective.

A second limitation was related to the stratified

sampling procedure. Although it was deemed necessary for the purposes of the present investigation to secure homogeneous categories of age, length of the marriage and the stage of the life cycle, the restriction of individuals to specific criteria often reveals that they only possess the obvious categorical trait, having little else in common. Albeit that similarities were found among the individuals in this study generalizations must be approached with caution as the subjects were not necessarily representative of the target population. Moreover, the results of this study are intended to be suggestive, not conclusive.

The third shortcoming of this investigation surrounded instrumentation. The MYMPS or Older Person's Perception Scale, for instance, has no evidence concerning validity and reliabilty. Furthermore, satisfaction and happiness are phenomena that possessnuances of meaning. Although both questionnaires employed several statements thereby not restricting the measurement of satisfaction or happiness to only one expression, there was a high reliance on the subjective and honest responses of the subjects.

Suggestions for Future Research

Due to subject availabilty, only those couples who had at least one child were considered for participation in this study. Investigations of childless middle-aged couples may therefore offer different results and thereby provide additional information to those interested in understanding

the middle-aged individual.

Another area that warrants investigation, particularly for the interests of the counsellor and family life educator would be the exploration of the middle-aged couples who have just recently launched their first child from the home. It would be interesting to see if the impact of the first launch would have more drastic effects on the couples' perceptions of life and marriage than the launching of the last child.

REFERENCES

Antonucci, T. Relationship between values and adjustment in old men. International Journal of Aging and Human Development, 1974, 5(1), 57-69.

Axelson, L. J. Personal adjustment in the postparental period. Marriage and Family Living, 1960, 22, 66-68.

Bach, G. & Deutsch, R. Pairing. New York: Avon Books, 1970.

Barry, W. L. Marriage research and conflict: an integrative review. Psychological Bulletin, 1970, 73, 41-54.

Bell, B. D. Family life cycle primary relationships and social participation patterns. Gerontologist, 1973, 13, 78-81.

Bell, B. D. A three phase approach to retirement and life satisfaction. Gerontologist, 1975, 15 (5), 49.

Bergler, E. The revolt of the middle-aged man. New York: Hill & Wang, Inc., 1958.

Berry, J. Counseling older women: a perspective. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1976, 55 (3), 130-131.

Blishen, B. C. The construction and use of an occupational class scale. In B. C. Blishen, F. Jones & K. Naegele (Eds.), Canadian society: sociological perspectives. Toronto: MacMillan, 1965.

Blood, R. & Wolfe, D. Husbands and wives. New York: Free Press, 1960.

Bossard, J. & Boll, E. Marital happiness in the life cycle. Marriage and Family Living, 1955, 17, 10-14.

Bradbury, W. The adult years. In H. Donovan, Time life books: human behavior. New York: Time Inc., 1975.

Brayshaw, A. J. Middle-aged marriage: idealism, realism and search for meaning. Marriage and Family Living, 1962, 24 (4), 358-364.

Bull, C. N. & Aucoin, J. B. Voluntary association participation and life satisfaction: a replication note. Journal of Gerontology, 1975, 3 (1), 73-76.

Burr, W. R. Satisfaction with various aspects of marriage

over the life cycle: a random middle class sample. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1970, 32, 29-37.

Burgess, E. W. & Cotrell, L. S., Jr. Predicting success or failure in marriage. New York: Prentice Hall, 1939.

Burgess, E. W. & Wallin, P. Engagement and marriage. Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott, 1953.

Canada Year Book. Ministry of Industry Trade and Commerce. Ottowa, 1973.

Canada Year Book. Ministry of Industry Trade and Commerce. Ottowa, 1975.

Cavan, R. Marriage and the family in the modern world. New York: Crowell, 1969.

Christensen, H. T. Marriage analysis. New York: Ronald Press, 1950.

Cuber, J. & Haroff, P. The more total view: relationships among men and women of the upper middle class. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1963, 2, 140-145.

Cutwright, P. Income and family events: marital stability. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1971, 33, 307-317.

Deutsch, H. Psychology of women. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1945.

Deutscher, I. Married life in the middle years: a study of middle class urban postparental couples. Kansas City: University of Missouri Press, 1959.

Deutscher, I. The quality of postparental life: definition of the situation. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1964, 26, 52-59.

Duvall, E. M. Family development. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1967.

Elder, G. H. Age differentiation and life course. Annual Review of Sociology, 1975, 1, 165-190.

Edwards, J. N. & Klemmack, D. L. Correlates of life satisfaction. Journal of Gerontology, 1973, 28, 497-502.

Eisenberg, J. & Zingle, H. W. Marital adjustment and irrational ideas. Journal of Marriage and Family Counseling, 1975, 1 (1), 81-91.

Erikson, E. Childhood and society. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1950.

Feldman, H. Development of husband/wife relationship. Preliminary report Cornell studies of marital development: study in the transition to parenthood. Dept. of child development and family relationships. New York State College of Home Economics, Cornell University, 1964. (University microfims No. 65033)

Ferguson, G. Statistical analysis in psychology & education. New York: McGraw-Hill Company, 1971.

Fengler, A. P. The effects of age and education on marital idealology. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1943, 35, 264-271.

Figley, C. Child density and the marital relationship. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1973, 35 (2), 272-282.

Fried, E. G. & Stern, K. The situation of the aged within the family. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1948, 18, 31-54.

Glenn, N. D. Psychological well-being in the postparental stage - some evidence from national surveys. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1975, 37 (1), 105-110.

Glick, P. C. The family life cycle. American Sociological Review, 1947, 12, 165-174.

Gravatt, A. E. Family relations in middle and old age: a review. Journal of Gerontology, 1953, 8, 197-201.

Greenleigh, L. Facing challenge of change in middle age. Geriatrics, 1974, 29 (11), 61-68.

Gruenberg, S. M. The turbulent middle years. Survey, 1950, 86, 121-125.

Gurin, G., Veroff, J. & Feld, S. Americans view their mental health. New York: Basic Books, 1960.

Hain, L. L. Age, ambitions and political careers - middle-age crisis. Western Political Quarterly, 1974, 27 (2), 265-274.

Havighurst, R. The social competence of middle-aged people. Genetic Psychological Monographs, 1957, 56, 297-395.

Helmstadter, C. C. Research concepts in human behavior:

education, psychology, sociology. New York: Meredith Corporation, 1970.

Hicks, M. W. & Platt, M. Marital happiness and stability: a review of the research in the 60's. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1970, 32, 553-574.

Hodgekinson, H. L. Adult development implications for faculty and administrators. Educational Record, 1974, 55 (4), 263-275.

Horn, J. Happiness is an empty nest. Psychology Today, 1976 9 (8), 22-25.

Hurley, J. & Palonen, D. Marital satisfactiona and child density among university student parents. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1967, 29, 483-484.

Kerckhoff, R. K. Marriage and middle age. Family Coordinator, 1976, 25 (1), 5-11.

Kimmel, D. C. Is there life beyond adolescence? Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1976, 55 (3), 103-105.

Kinsey, A. Sexual behavior in the human male. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1948.

Kuhlen, R. G. Developmental changes in motivation during the adult years. In B. L. Neugarten (Ed.), Middle age and aging. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Landis, J. T. Social correlates of divorce or nondivorce among the unhappy married. Marriage and Family Living, 1963, 25, 178-180.

Lang. R. O. A study of the degree of happiness or unhappiness in marriage. Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1932.

Le Mon, C. Sex life of the middle aged. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1949, 11, 58-60.

Le Shan, E. The wonderful crisis of middle age. New York: David McKay Co., 1973.

Levinson, D. The psychosocial development of men in early adulthood and the mid-life transition. New Haven: Yale University, 1973.

Levy, J. & Munroe, R. The happy family. New York: A. A. Knopff, 1943.

Lewis, N. D. Mental hygiene in later maturity. In O. Kaplan (Ed.), Mental disorders in later life. California: Stanford University Press, 1945.

Lipman, A. Role conceptions and morale of couples in retirement. Journal of Gerontology, 1961, 15, 267-271.

Locke, H. J. Predicting adjustment in marriage: a comparison of a divorced and a happily married group. New York: Henry Holt, 1951.

Long, I. Human sexuality and aging. Social Casework, 1976, 57 (4), 237-244.

Luckey, E. B. Number of years married as related to personality perception and marital satisfaction. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1966, 28 (1), 44-50.

Luckey, E. B. & Bain, J. K. Children: a factor in marital satisfaction. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1970, 32 (1), 43-44.

Maddox, G. L. Activity and morale: a longitudinal study of selected elderly subjects. Social Forces, 1963, 42, 181-182.

Masters, W. & Johnson, V. Human sexual response. Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1966.

Mathews, V. D. & Mihanovich, C. S. New orientations of marital adjustment. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1963, 25, 300-304.

McMorrow, F. Midolescence: the dangerous years. New York: Strawberry Hill Publishing Co., Inc., 1974.

Monahan, T. P. When married couples part: statistical trends and relationships in divorce. American Sociological Review, 1962, 27, 625-633.

Neugarten, B. L. Middle age and aging. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Neugarten, B. L. Patterns of aging: past, present and future. Social Service Review, 1973, 47 (4), 571-580.

Neugarten, B. L. & Datar, N. The middle years. In S. Arieti (Ed.), American handbook of psychiatry. New York: Basic Books, 1974.

Neugarten, B. L., Havighurst, R. J. & Tobin, S. The measurement of life satisfaction. Journal of Gerontology, 1961, 16, 134-143.

Nye, F. J., Carlson, J. & Garrett,G. Family size, interaction, affect and stress. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1970, 32, 216-220.

Otto, L. B. Class and status in family research. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1975, 37 (2), 315-332.

Paris, B. L. & Luckey, E. B. A longitudinal study in marital satisfaction. Sociological and Social Review, 1966, 50, 212-222.

Peck, R. C. Psychological development in the second half of life. In B. L. Neugarten (Ed.), Middle age and aging. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Peterson, J. A. Marital and family therapy involving the aged. Gerontologist, 1973, 13, 27-31.

Peterson, J. A. Married love in the middle years. New York: Association Press, 1968.

Pineo, P. Disenchantment in the later years of marriage. Marriage and Family Living, 1961, 23, 3-11.

Renee, K. Correlates of dissatisfaction in marriage. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1970, 32, 54-66.

Rappaport, L. Adult development: faster horses and more money. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1976, 55 (3), 106-108.

Rollins, B. & Cannon, K. Marital satisfaction over the family life cycle: a reevaluation. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1974, 36 (2), 271-282.

Rollins, B. & Feldman, H. Marital satisfaction over the family life cycle. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1970, 32, 20-28.

Rose, A. M. Factors associated with life satisfaction of middle class middle-aged persons. Marriage and Family Living, 1955, 17, 15-19.

Safilios-Rothchild, C. A comparison of power structure in urban and Greek French families. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1967, 25, 345-352.

Scanzoni, J. Family organization and the probability of disorganization. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1966, 28, 407-411.

Schaie, K. W. & Gribbon, K. Adult development and aging. Annual Review of Psychology, 1975, 26, 65-96.

Shanas, E. Family help patterns and social class in three countries. In B. L. Neugarten (Ed.), Middle age and aging. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Spreitzer, E., Snyder, E. & Larson, D. Age, education, and occupation as correlates of the meaning of leisure. Psychological Reports, 1974, 35, 1105-1106.

Statistics Canada. Population and housing characteristics by census tracts (Edmonton catalogue No. 95-727 CT-27A). Ministry of Industry, Trade and Commerce, 1973.

Statistics Canada. Vital statistics: marriage and divorce (volume II, No. 84205), 1976.

Stinnett, N., Carter, L., & Montgomery, J. Older persons perceptions of their marriages. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1972, 34 (4), 665-670.

Stinnett, N., Collins, J., & Montgomery, J. Marital need satisfaction of older husbands and wives. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1970, 32 (3), 428-434.

Stinnett, N. & Hayes, M. Life satisfaction of middle-aged husbands and wives. Journal of Home Economics, 1971, 63 (6), 669-674.

Sussman, M. B. Intergenerational family relationships and social changes in marital adjustment. Journal of Gerontology, 1960, 15 (1), 71-75.

Tibbitts, C, & Donahue, W. Aging in today's society. Engelwood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1960.

Townsend, P. The family life of old people. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957.

Troll, L. The family of later life: Journal of Marriage and the Family, 1971, 33, 263-290.

Vedder, C. B. The problems of the middle aged. Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1965.

Waller, W. & Hill, R. The family: a dynamic interpretation. New York: Dryden, 1950.

Wechsler, D. Manual for the Wechsler adult intelligence scale. New York: Psychological Corporation, 1955.

APPENDIX A

ATTITUDE INVENTORY

DIRECTIONS: For each statement below please circle the symbol that represents your feelings about the statement Since your responses will remain confidential please be as honest as possible in evaluating your own attitude. There are no right or wrong answers. PLEASE RESPOND TO EACH STATEMENT

KEY: SA Strongly agree
A Agree
U Undecided
D Disagree
SD Strongly Disagree

SA A U D SD 1. If I could re-live my life, I would again choose my present partner for a mate.

SA A U D SD 2. In comparing my marriage to what I consider to be the "ideal marriage", I would judge mine to be a poor one.

SA A U D SD 3. I feel that my mate and I have developed satisfactory methods for handling any conflicts or disagreements we may have.

SA A U D SD 4. I do not enjoy the manner in which my mate and I spend our spare time.

SA A U D SD 5. I am satisfied with the amount of affection I receive from my marriage partner.

SA A U D SD 6. In comparing my health to that of others my age, I would say that I am in very good condition.

SA A U D SD 7. I do not feel that I have any health problems of a recurring nature that interfere with my daily living.

SA A U D SD 8. I feel that there have been too many days during recent years that I have been confined to home or bed because of illness.

SA A U D SD 9. I seem to have plenty of energy for the activities in which I am interested and I do not tire easily.

SA A U D SD 10. I do not expect that my health will be very good when I reach retirement age.

SA A U D SD 11. I feel that our income is sufficient to cover all of my family's and my needs.

SA A U D SD 12. I often speculate on how much nicer life would be if we could only afford a higher standard of living.

SA A U D SD 13. In general, I am satisfied with the home that we have, our household furnishings, our car and other possessions.

SA A U D SD 14. I think that I dress as well or better than most of my friends.

SA A U D SD 15. I feel that our family financial situation is insecure to the extent that I often worry about the future.

SA A U D SD 16. I do not receive much satisfaction or feeling of accomplishment from my work (consider housework if you are a fulltime homemaker).

SA A U D SD 17. If I were starting over and was at the point of choosing my life's work, I would make the same choice that I made before.

SA A U D SD 18. As far as my life's work is concerned, I do not feel that I have reached or surpassed the goal that I set for myself earlier in life.

SA A U D SD 19. I feel that my work is rewarding in other ways than just the monetary benefits it provides.

SA A U D SD 20. I do not believe that I have received a sufficient amount of recognition, advancement and compensation for the work that I have been doing.

SA A U D SD 21. I feel that I have been a good parent and did as good a job of rearing my children as possible.

SA A U D SD 22. My children do not seem to appreciate all that I have done for them.

SA A U D SD 23. I feel that my grown children (over 18 years of age) and I have a good mature relationship that involves mutual respect and genuine fondness for each other.

SA A U D SD 24. My children that have left home fail to keep in touch with me and do not come home as often as I think they should.

SA A U D SD 25. I believe that my children and I are mutually concerned about each other's welfare and would be quick to help if assistance was needed.

SA A U D SD 26. I do not entertain guests in my home as frequently as I desire.

SA A U D SD 27. I feel that my mate and I have a sufficient number of close friends and we see them as often as we would like.

SA A U D SD 28. I belong to and participate in the clubs and organizations that I enjoy and think are worthwhile.

SA A U D SD 29. I am not satisfied with the amount of time I devote to church attendance and religious activities.

SA A U D SD 30. I do not feel that my leisure time is spent with those activities that I most enjoy doing.

SA A U D SD 31. If I were to compare myself with members of my high school graduating class, I believe I would find myself as successful or more successful than most.

SA A U D SD 32. I usually try to be as well groomed and attractive as possible.

SA A U D SD 33. I do not believe my children and my marriage partner consider me to be a very important part of their lives.

SA A U D SD 34. I feel that much of the success that I have achieved is due to luck, rather than because of any special ability or effort on my part.

SA A U D SD 35. When my family members or acquaintances come to me for advice, I feel that I have the wisdom and experience to be of great help to them.

SA A U D SD 36. I am bothered by the increased number of wrinkles that have accumulated on my face over the years.

SA A U D SD 37. I feel compelled to do something about my increasing weight.

SA A U D SD 38. At times I feel concerned about growing old and unattractive.

SA A U D SD 39. I feel less physically attractive now than when I first married my spouse.

SA A U D SD 40. I think it is important for a person to maintain a youthful appearance and youthful attitude towards life.

APPENDIX B

GENERAL INFORMATION

Your cooperation in this research is greatly appreciated. Please answer the items below as frankly as possible. The absence of your name assures you that all your responses will be confidential. Please check the answers which most apply to you.

1. Your age:
   _1. 40-44 _3. 50-54
   _2. 45-49 _4. 55-60

2. Your sex: _Male _Female

3. How many years have you been married to your spouse?
   _1. 15-19 years _3. 25-29 years
   _2. 20-24 years _4. 30 years or more

4. Total number of children:
   _1. One _3. 3, 4 or 5
   _2. Two _4. 6 or more

5. When did your last child leave home?
   _1. less than one year ago _3. 5-9 years ago
   _2. 1-4 years ago _4. has not left yet

6. Occupation of Husband: _____

7. Occupation of wife: _____

8. Approximate length of time spent at this occupation:
   _1. less than one year _3. 10-19 years
   _2. 1-9 years _4. 20 years or more

9. Approximate gross total family income:
   _1. less tha $7,999 _4. $20,000-$25,999
   _2. $8,000-$13,999 _5. $26,000-$30,999
   _3. $14,000-$19,999 _6. $31,000 or more

10. What is the highest educational level reached by the principal earner of the above income?
    _1. less than grade 8
    _2. completed grade 8 but did not attend beyond grade 9
    _3. attended high school completed grade 9, did not graduate
    _4. graduated from high school
    _5. attended college or university for two or more years
    _6. graduated from four year college or university
    _7. completed more than four years of university training for a profession

11. What is the highest educational level that you have reached? (Answer only if you are not the principal earner of the above income).
    _1. less than grade 8

_2. completed grade 8 but did not attend beyond grade 9
_3. attended high school, completed grade 9, did not graduate
_4. graduated from high school
_5. attended college or university for two or more years
_6. graduated from four year college or university
_7. completed more than four years of university training for a profession

12. For the major part of your life have you lived
_1. on a farm or in the country?
_2. small town under 25,000 population?
_3. city of 25,000 to 50,000 population?
_4. city of over 50,000 population?

13. Do you do any kind of volunteer work for which you receive no pay?
_Yes _No

14. How many social or civic organizations do you belong to and participate in?
_1. None _2. 1-3 _3. 4 or more

15. Do you enjoy belonging to and participating in civic and social organizations? _Yes _No

16. Do you actively participate in church activities?
_1. very much _3. very little
_2. average participation _4. Not at all

The following statements have been designed to help us better understand the marriage relationship. There are no right or wrong answers. Please circle the number which corresponds to the statement that best describes your feelings.

17. How would you rate your own marital happiness at the present time?
1. very happy
2. happy
3. unhappy
4. very unhappy

18. Which of the following do you consider to be the happiest period of your married life?
1. the present time
2. young adult years without children
3. when children were small
4. when children were teenagers

19. Since the time that you and your spouse were first married, do you feel that your marriage has become
    1. better
    2. worse
    3. about the same

20. In general do you think most marriages become better or worse over time?
    1. better
    2. worse
    3. remain the same

21. What do you consider to be the most rewarding aspect of your marriage relationship?
    1. companionship
    2. economic security
    3. status in the community
    4. sexual relationship
    5. being needed by my spouse
    6. having my emotional needs met
    7. our being able to express true feelings
    8. none are rewarding

22. What aspect of your marriage relationship do you consider to be the most troublesome?
    1. frequent disagreements
    2. lack of mutual interests
    3. our sexual relationship
    4. too little time spent together
    5. too much time spent together
    6. different values and philosophies of life
    7. inability to express true feelings
    8. no trouble at all

23. What do you think is the most important characteristic of a successful marriage?
    1. mutual respect
    2. determination
    3. personality growth
    4. emotional closeness
    5. sexual satisfaction
    6. expression of true feelings
    7. having children
    8. being in love

24. What worries you more than anything else at the present time?
    1. money
    2. health
    3. children's welfare
    4. social and political problems
    5. business matters

6. my relationship with my spouse
7. loss of youthful appearance and vitality
8. aging parents
9. loneliness, depression and/or boredom

25. What period of life do you consider to have been the happiest?
    1. my childhood
    2. my teen years
    3. young adult years while single
    4. early years of marriage without children
    5. when children were small
    6. when children were teenagers
    7. the present time

26. What do you consider to be the greatest advantage of the present period of life?
    1. more freedom
    2. larger income
    3. more time with spouse
    4. free time to develop new interests and hobbies
    5. ability to return to work (wife)
    6. more time spent for social activities
    7. other (specify please_____)
    8. nothing at all

APPENDIX C

The University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2G5

FACULTY OF EDUCATION CLINICAL SERVICES

Harvey W. Zingle
Co-ordinator

Counselling	*Psychological Testing*	*Learning and Development*	*Reading and Language*	*Speech*
John G. Paterson	Henry L. Janzen	David Baine	Grace Malicky	Jean P. McIntyre

Dear

We are presently conducting a survey on marriage in the middle years. The purpose of this study is to enable marriage and family counsellors to better understand the concerns of middle-aged husbands and wives regarding marriage and life.

Your name was randomly selected from our list of middle-aged couples in the Edmonton area and your opinions are crucial in providing the information that we require.

We would sincerely appreciate your giving us forty minutes of your time to complete two questionnaires. These questionnaires are impersonal in nature and are designed to investigate the attitudes couples have about their marriages and lives. Your name is not placed on any of the questionnaires and all your written responses will remain confidential. You are not expected to do or say anything apart from completing these two questionnaires.

Mrs. Abrioux, my research assistant, will contact you by telephone during the next two weeks in order to arrange an appointment to see both of you at the University or at your home, whichever you prefer. If you have any questions about this research project before Mrs.Abrioux contacts you, please feel free to call her at 432-5893 or 436-2637, or myself at 432-3745.

Your cooperation in completing this study will be greatly appreciated because you will be helping us to help others.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Harvey W. Zingle, Ph.D.
Professor and Coordinator

(Mrs.) Marie-Louise Abrioux
Graduate Student
Research Assistant

APPENDIX D

The University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2G5

FACULTY OF EDUCATION CLINICAL SERVICES

Harvey W. Zingle
Co-ordinator

Counselling	*Psychological Testing*	*Learning and Development*	*Reading and Language*	*Speech*
John G. Paterson	Henry L. Janzen	David Balne	Grace Malicky	Jean P. McIntyre

Dear

We are presently conducting a survey on marriage in the middle years. The purpose of this study is to enable marriage and family counsellors to better understand the concerns of middle-aged husbands and wives regarding marriage and life.

We would sincerely appreciate it if some of your clients, who fit the necessary criteria, would each complete two questionnaires. These questionnaires are impersonal in nature and are designed to investigate the attitudes couples have about their marriages and lives. The questionnaires are presented in a multiple choice format and take approximately forty minutes to complete. Responses to the questionnaires will be anonymous.

The criteria for the couples under investigation are: that they be between the ages of forty and sixty; that they have been married fifteen years or more; that they are still living together; that they have had at least one child.

Rather than cause you or your clients any inconvenience, Mrs. Abrioux, my research assistant, would be willing to present these questionnaires to your clients following or prior to your session with them. Mrs. Abrioux will contact you within two weeks of your having received this letter in order to arrange a convenient time for your clients to complete these questionnaires. Should you wish to contact Mrs. Abrioux prior to her calling you, please feel free to call her at 436-2637, or 432-5893.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely.

Harvey W. Zingle, Ph.D.

Marie-Louise Abrioux